

# *A Wheelchair Rider's Guide*

**Los Angeles and Orange County Coast**

**ERICK & ELISA MIKITEN**



**COASTWALK *with the* COASTAL CONSERVANCY**

**COASTWALK**, a nonprofit organization, is working for the completion of the California Coastal Trail, and promotes stewardship of coastal resources. Coastwalk organizes coastal hikes, and has published the two-volume guidebook *Hiking the California Coastal Trail*.

**THE COASTAL CONSERVANCY**, a state agency, works with the people of California to expand public access to the coast and San Francisco Bay, and to preserve and restore coastal resources. The Conservancy has opened over 70 miles of shoreline to the public and has helped to preserve over 60,000 acres of wetlands, wildlife habitat, parks, and farmland. The Conservancy provided funding to Coastwalk to prepare and distribute this guide.

**CREDITS**

*Produced by* Rasa Gustaitis

*Edited by* Hal Hughes and Rasa Gustaitis

*Designed and composed by* Seventeenth Street Studios

*Special thanks to photographers* Malcolm Lubliner and Larry Wan  
*and to* Irene Barnard

*Cover photos by* Malcolm Lubliner

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Coastal Conservancy Publications  
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612  
510/286-0933  
calcoast@igc.org

Coastwalk  
7207 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472  
800/550-6854  
coastwalk@coastwalk.org

**THIS GUIDE IS AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE**  
and will also be accessible on-line through the web sites  
of Coastwalk, [www.coastwalk.org](http://www.coastwalk.org) and the Coastal  
Conservancy, [www.scc.ca.gov](http://www.scc.ca.gov).



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# A Wheelchair Rider's Guide

**W**HEN A WHEELCHAIR-RIDING guy from Texas moves to California and hooks up with a skateboarding gal, they've got to find some wheel-friendly beaches. This book chronicles our search for wheelchair access on 150 miles of coastline, from Malibu to San Clemente. We traveled the coast in the year 2000, Erick on his Quickie manual wheelchair and Elisa on her skateboard. We drove every mile of the Los Angeles and Orange County coastline and hiked about a hundred miles of it. (Yes! We found that many usable trails!) Far from frustrating, we found the southern California coast to be remarkably accessible and full of surprises.

There's a huge variety of beaches along the Los Angeles and Orange County coastline. Some are in urban areas packed with people, food, and entertainment; others are serene plant and wildlife refuges where you can spend an afternoon transfixed by the beauty. Along this coast you will find mountainous canyons and ocean cliffs, as well as flat sandy beaches with open views of waves and the horizon.

In this book our goal is to help you plan the trip you want. If it's an easy stroll you're looking for, we'll point you in the right direction. If it's an off-road adventure you crave, we'll tell you where to find that too. There were more great sites than we could fit into the book; we expect that people will be writing to us with their discoveries.

Southern California's passion for exercise has advantages for wheelchair riders: in central Los Angeles County and southern Orange County, concrete bicycle paths have been built on most of the beaches. They are great for explorations on wheels. And if your family or friends want to join in, they can rent a set of wheels at a bicycle or skate shop.

We've tried to describe each site in this book in enough detail for you to evaluate in advance whether it's worth visiting. We've described degrees of difficulty on trails, and the features of restrooms and other facilities. The word "accessible" occurs sparingly because it means different things to different people. When we do use it in describing restrooms, we mean "modern textbook accessible," with five-foot turning radius, two grab bars, and a high toilet.

As we traveled along this coastline, we learned a few things about comfort. First, even southern California beaches can suddenly become cool, especially in the early evening, so windbreakers are a must. Second, you always stay longer than you intend, so bring snacks and especially water. And finally, there's a lot of glare on a sandy beach: sunscreen, sunglasses, and baseball caps are a real help. We stuffed these things into a backpack and hitched it onto Erick's chair. We also brought binoculars for watching birds and whales, fingerless weightlifting gloves, which Erick likes to wear on longer hikes, and moist towelettes for easy cleanup after dusty trails.

Happy travels!

Erick and Elisa Mikiten



# *How to use this book*

SOME HINTS TO HELP YOU USE  
THIS GUIDE TO BEST ADVANTAGE

**T**HIS GUIDE is an invitation to explore wheelchair-accessible beaches, parks, preserves, and other coastal places between Malibu and San Clemente. We hope it will be useful not only to residents and visitors who travel by wheelchair but also to many other people, including parents wheeling strollers and elderly people with canes.

## **What's Inside**

Take a moment to get acquainted with what's inside. The sites we included are generally within walking distance of the shore and offer something special, be it great views, interesting activities, or opportunities to watch wildlife, get to know native plants, or learn something of local history.

There are more accessible sites every year. When we first toured the Los Angeles coastline for the Coastal Conservancy in 1993, we found far fewer than we did in 2000. Each year more obstacles are being removed from pathways and more facilities are brought up to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Explore, inquire, and check web sites.

## **Organization and Maps**

The guide moves downcoast, from northern Los Angeles County to southern Orange County, following the Pacific Coast Highway most of the way. The sketchy maps of the two counties on p. 2 and p. 66 provide an idea of distances between some of the sites and suggest the shape of the coastline. It's easy to navigate north of Santa Monica, where the highway follows the coast, but we suggest you get a road map for destinations from Santa Monica south. Diagrams of individual sites are provided only where they seemed essential.

## ICONS



**PARKING:** Blue cars indicate parking areas with dedicated blue spaces. Check the text for accessibility.



**FREE BEACH WHEELCHAIRS:** Available at some sites, but more beaches may have them by the time you read this. Call ahead if you can, to ask and reserve.



**RESTROOMS:** Don't rely only on the symbol. Read the text for details: some "accessible" restrooms are old and not up to ADA standards. Some that are not marked "accessible" may work for you.



**PICNIC AREAS:** Indicated only where they are wheelchair-accessible.



**INFORMATION CENTER**



**PLAY STRUCTURE**

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## Hiking Safely

The trails in this guide are not all flat. Many are, but others are at the upper limit of what an athletic and daring wheelchair rider would attempt with a manual chair. If we call a trail "steep" or "difficult," believe it. That trail is likely to include real risks, such as steep passages where you can't come to a complete stop, potholes, or slippery surfaces, and it will require great physical strength and balance to travel its length. Likewise, if we say that a trail is "too steep for wheelchair riding," we mean it.

You are your own best judge for choosing trails that are safe for you. Rather than making assumptions about people's ability or interest, we've included trails of widely varied difficulty. But please, exercise your own judgment.

## Terminology

We use the terms "walk" and "ride" interchangeably. "Walk" means travel at a slow speed, whether you're on foot or on wheels.

In most communities, "Pacific Coast Highway" is synonymous with "Highway 1." In a few places, one or the other is used exclusively, but you probably won't notice unless you're looking at a local map.

The steepness of ramps is measured by a ratio. A standard ramp is 1:12, meaning that the ramp rises 1 inch for every 12 inches of length.

## **Where to Find Out More**

The *Public Transportation* section, p. 103, lists public transit information. We've also included phone numbers for most of the sites. Use these sources for information about facilities, beach wheelchairs, docent-led walks, and special events. If they can't answer accessibility questions, they likely will refer you to someone who can. Among helpful web sites are those of the State Parks Department, [www.cal-parks.ca.gov](http://www.cal-parks.ca.gov); the Los Angeles Department of Beaches and Harbors, [beaches.co.la.ca.us](http://beaches.co.la.ca.us); and the County of Orange Harbors, Beaches, and Parks, [www.ocparks.com](http://www.ocparks.com). On all these sites you will find photographs, maps, and short descriptions of beaches and parks that you can download. The State Parks site also links to a list of currently accessible features in each park. These sites are likely to carry updates on projects to improve accessibility. This guide will also be accessible on-line by 2002 through the web sites of Coastwalk, [www.coastwalk.org](http://www.coastwalk.org), and the Coastal Conservancy, [www.scc.ca.gov](http://www.scc.ca.gov).

## **Beach Wheelchairs**

Large chairs with balloon tires that can roll over sand are available free of charge at several beaches. They require someone other than the rider to push from behind, and are easiest to push on wet sand. Income from sales of the special Coast 4-U automobile license plate enabled the Coastal Conservancy and Coastal Commission to fund the purchase of beach wheelchairs. Call ahead to confirm that a chair is available. Also call ahead if you need more than one.

## **Fishing**

Anyone may fish from a public pier at the ocean or a bay without a license. If you are 16 years or older, you need a license to fish from any other location. Most bait and tackle shops sell licenses.

## Wildlife

Please respect local wildlife. Remember—the quieter you are, the more you will see and hear. If a dog is with you, please use a leash to prevent it from flushing and chasing shorebirds. Many birds are on long migrations and need to feed and rest.

## Comments

We'd like to hear from you. Let us know if this book was useful, if anything needs to be changed, and if you found barriers that could be removed. Send your comments to the Coastal Conservancy, 1330 Broadway, 11th floor, Oakland, CA 94612. In the bottom left corner of the envelope, write: Attention Wheelchair Guides. You can also e-mail the editors at [calcoast@igc.org](mailto:calcoast@igc.org) or call (510) 286-0934.



ERICK MIKITTEN

*The authors on the trail*



# Los Angeles County

## THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COAST

**F**ROM THE RUGGED Santa Monica Mountains in Malibu through Long Beach Harbor to Belmont, the Los Angeles County coast is richly varied, offering many opportunities for recreation and adventure. More than half of the coast is publicly owned, and much of it can be easily explored with a wheelchair. Where the terrain is difficult, there are often scenic drives.

Malibu's 27-mile coast lies at the base of the Santa Monica Mountains. Steep slopes keep a few beaches inaccessible, but others are open for wheelchair riding. Camping facilities and nature trails at the foot of the mountains are outstanding, and the views from the Pacific Coast Highway are breathtaking.

South of Malibu, on Santa Monica Bay, wheelchair access is easy at Los Angeles city beaches. There are numerous piers and boardwalks, and beach wheelchairs are available in several locations for traveling across sand. The paved 22-mile South Bay Bicycle Trail runs on the beach between Will Rogers State Beach and Torrance County Beach.

Farther downcoast, the Pacific Coast Highway cuts across the Palos Verdes Peninsula, which separates Santa Monica Bay from the Long Beach Harbor area. Palos Verdes Drive provides dramatic views of rugged shores and the ocean.

The south end of the county is not to be missed, despite the utilitarian landscape at the shipping ports. Among several interesting stops in the Los Angeles Harbor area is Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, especially great for wheelchair-riding children. Long Beach has a wonderful larger aquarium and miles of paved walks along the shore.

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
BEACHES**

*This map includes only enough locations and routes to give a general idea where the sites described in this book can be found.*



# Malibu

LEO CARRILLO STATE PARK TO  
TOPANGA COUNTY BEACH

**T**HE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY (PCH) travels Malibu's dramatic 27-mile shoreline at the edge of the Santa Monica Mountains. You can pull off the road at numerous spots and take in the view. Leo Carrillo State Park Campground at the north end of Malibu has especially good beach access, and also camping facilities. Downcoast of Topanga Canyon Boulevard the popular beaches are broad and flat. Malibu Lagoon and the Malibu Lagoon Museum are particularly interesting for wild-life viewing and local history.



MALCOLM LUBLINER

*Back garden of Adamson House (see p. 14)*

## Leo Carrillo State Park

ONE MILE DOWNCOAST OF THE VENTURA COUNTY LINE  
ENTRANCE ON PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, 35000 BLOCK, INLAND SIDE

**T**HIS 3,000-ACRE PARK is at the upcoast end of Malibu, on the floor of a sycamore-shaded canyon that opens to a sandy beach. The park extends on both sides of the PCH. A pedestrian and vehicle underpass connects the canyon to the beach. It's well worth a visit, for it offers good beach access, picnic grounds, and 127 campsites for tents and recreational vehicles. Six campsites are wheelchair accessible. (Reserve early.)

### Day Use

There are two day-use parking areas: inland, just left of the entrance (3 blue spaces), and on the beach side of the underpass. From the inland parking area, a sloping walkway with handrails leads through the underpass beneath the highway to a paved area with a view of the

#### LEO CARRILLO

##### HOURS

Dawn to dusk for day use

##### INFORMATION

818/880-0350

Monday–Friday

8am–5pm

##### RESERVATIONS

800/444-PARK

##### FEES

*Day use*

\$3 per vehicle, \$2 seniors

*Hike and bike*

\$1 per person

*Camping*

\$12, \$10 seniors per night

##### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

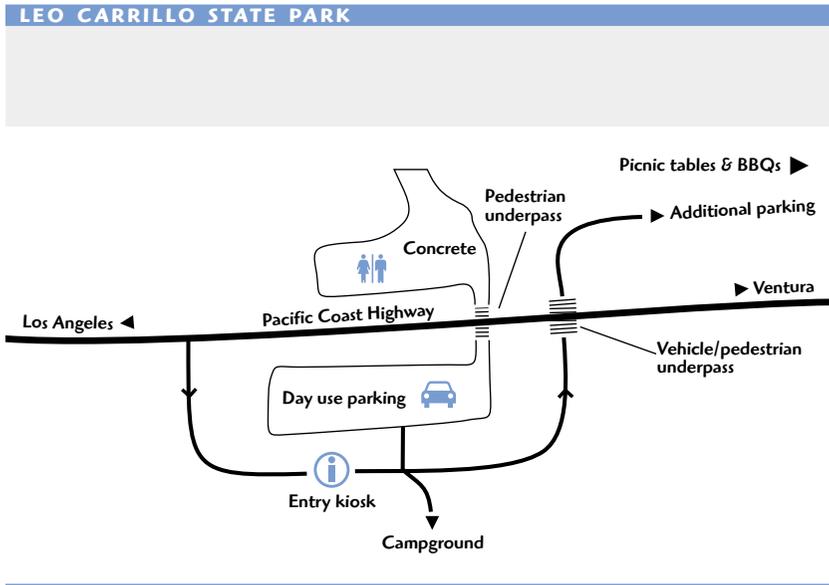
Available. Call ahead

310/457-1324, or inquire at the entrance.



LARRY WAN

*Balloon-tired wheelchairs take you right to the water.*



waves crashing into the sea stacks offshore. Between November and May you might see gray whales passing by. The 6,600-foot-long beach is divided into two areas by Sequit Point, with sea caves and a natural tunnel. Borrow a beach wheelchair at the entrance to explore the beach. There are day-use picnic areas with barbecue pits on the upcoast end of the beach.

## Camping

The campground is shaded by California sycamores. At night, the starry sky is framed beautifully by the canyon walls. Because there are no city lights nearby, the stars are especially bright. Each of the two accessible campsites has water, a picnic table on packed dirt and grass, and a low (15-inch) campfire pit with a grill. In the center of the campground are a store that carries basic supplies and a small amphitheater where people gather for sing-alongs and other events.

► **RESTROOMS** There are accessible restrooms and showers throughout the campground, and a unisex accessible restroom on the beach side of the underpass.

## Nicholas Canyon County Beach

PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AT NICHOLAS CANYON ROAD

**N**ICHOLAS CANYON COUNTY BEACH lies at the base of sea cliffs.

From the Pacific Coast Highway, a narrow entrance road winds down a steep hill to a parking area. The walk from there to the beach is steep, but cars with disabled placards or plates may drive to a lower parking area next to the lifeguard station, where there are two picnic tables. From there a gently sloping road carved into the bluff leads to accessible restrooms and an excellent 1:12 ramp, with landings and handrails, down to the sand. There is only sand between the ramp and the water, so access across the beach would be difficult.

### NICHOLAS CANYON

#### HOURS

6am to sunset

#### INFORMATION

310/305-9503 or

Lifeguard Headquarters

310/457-2525

#### FEES

*Weekdays* \$2 per vehicle

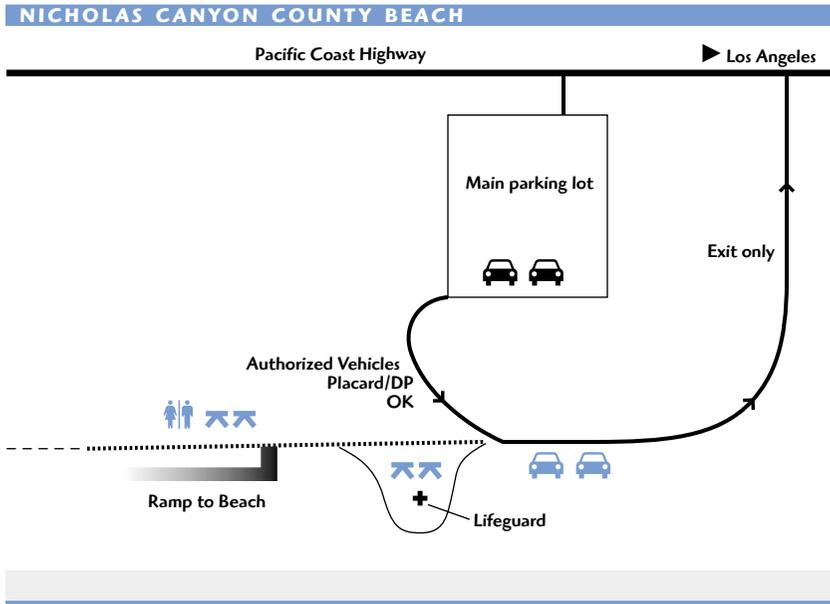
*Weekends* \$6

*Free with disabled placard or plates*

*This good ramp takes you to the sand.*



LARRY WAN



## *Robert H. Meyer Memorial State Beaches: El Pescador, La Piedra, El Matador*

### PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY NEAR ENCINAL CANYON ROAD

**E**ACH OF THESE BEACHES has a blufftop parking lot with ocean views, but the paths down to the beaches are too narrow and steep for wheelchair riding. Each gravel parking lot has one asphalt-paved blue space and accessible chemical toilets, with short 1:10 or 1:12 ramps. At El Pescador State Beach, 32900 Pacific Coast Highway, west of Encinal Canyon Road, rough gravel walkways extend from the parking lot toward the shore, but become impassable to wheelchairs before they reach the sand. At La Piedra State Beach, 32700 Pacific Coast Highway, walkways are narrow and rough through grasses, impassable for most

#### ROBERT H. MEYER

##### HOURS

8am to sunset

##### INFORMATION

310/457-8143

##### FEES

\$2



LARRY WAN

*Inaccessible beach, seen from blufftop parking lot*

wheelchair riders. A narrow dirt path leads to three picnic tables that are not easy to find. The “coastal access” path turns to steps. At El Matador State Beach, 32350 Pacific Coast Highway, east of Encinal Canyon Road, a picnic table on asphalt in front of the blue space has a view of the ocean. The trail to the beach is impassable.

## *Charmlee Wilderness Park*

2577 SOUTH ENCINAL CANYON ROAD,  
INLAND FROM PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

**M**OUNTAINOUS CHARMLEE WILDERNESS PARK is rough terrain for a wheelchair rider, but if you’re interested in canyon flora, it’s well worth the effort. With a manual wheelchair, good balance, and a lot of upper body strength, you’ll be able to reach the Nature Center, a picturesque oak grove, the first leg of the Botany Trail, and a fair bit of the fire trail (see map). Many electric wheelchair riders will also be able to reach the oak grove and perhaps the Nature Center, although you may need a companion to help navigate the slopes and bumps along the way. Most people will find that they can go only a short distance before erosion and cross-slopes make wheelchair travel hazardous. However, even the first few hundred feet of the Botany Trail make a pleasurable trip through sage, wildflowers, coyote bush, and oaks. The park is especially lovely dur-

### CHARMLEE WILDERNESS

#### HOURS

8am to sunset

#### NATURE CENTER

*Weekdays*

9am–5pm

*Weekends*

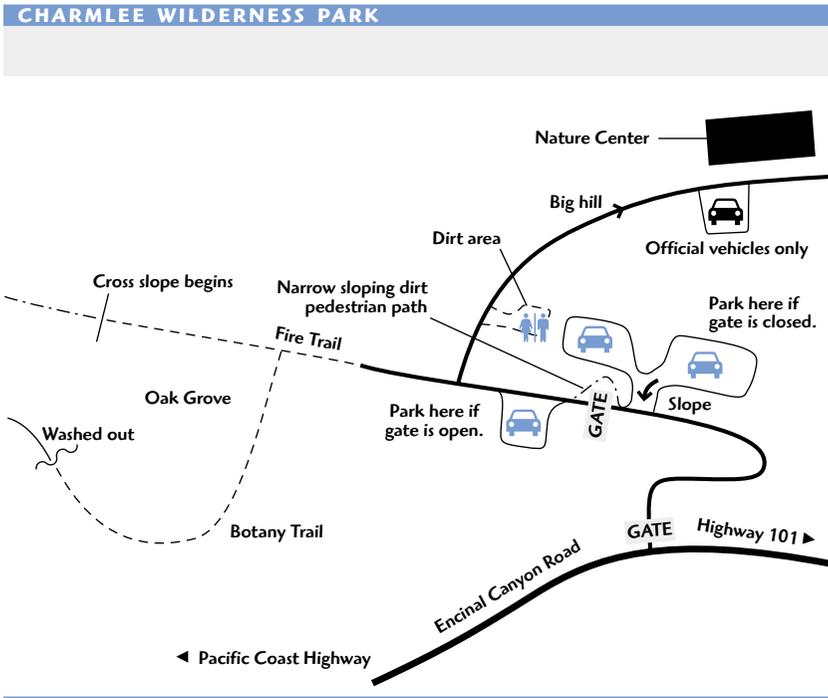
10 am–noon, 2 pm–4 pm

#### INFORMATION

310/457-7247

#### FEES

Parking \$3 per day



ing the spring bloom (late February through March). Occasionally the trail opens to views of the ocean and the canyon below.

The Nature Center is up an asphalt drive from the parking area, and has a seven-inch and a three-inch step up at the entrance. It offers displays on Chumash Indian history, the park's history as a working ranch, geology, local flora and fauna, and other subjects. Rangers are glad to talk about the area.

Even if you reach Charmlee Park and decide the terrain is too rough, you will have had a lovely drive into the canyon. In fact, we recommend the drive to everyone.

► **RESTROOMS** The accessible restroom building and drinking fountain are halfway up the steep road to the Nature Center. The parking lot is hard-packed dirt with a challenging slope at the driveway. There are no blue spaces. Cars are not permitted beyond the parking area, so be ready for a good push up the hill.



*Some wheelchair riders may want to explore the Charmlee Botany Trail, others may prefer a drive into the canyon (see p. 8).*

## Zuma Beach County Park

30000 BLOCK OF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY  
UPCOAST OF KANAN DUME ROAD

**Z**UMA BEACH is a four-mile expanse of flat sand backed by a string of parking lots. Zuma shares two beach wheelchairs with other beaches in Malibu. Call ahead to make sure they will be available. The wheelchairs are housed at the lifeguard headquarters half a mile in from the entrance gates. Without them it would be a challenge to cross the vast expanse of sand between the parking lot and the ocean. There are concession stands near the second and fourth restroom buildings from the entrance. A set of gymnastics rings is on soft sand 25 feet from the third restroom building.

► **RESTROOMS** All restrooms are easily accessible, with wide doorways and spacious interiors. Accessible showers are mounted on the outside walls. Most of the blue parking spaces are near restroom buildings.

### ZUMA

#### HOURS

Sunrise to sunset

#### INFORMATION

Monday–Thursday

310/305-9503

Lifeguard Headquarters

310/457-2525

#### FEES

Free to \$6 (varies with time of day and season)

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available at lifeguard headquarters

## Westward Beach/Point Dume State Preserve

END OF WESTWARD BEACH ROAD, OFF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

**W**ESTWARD BEACH ROAD runs at the base of sea cliffs that jut out into the ocean at Point Dume. The public beach adjoins Westward Beach Road and the parking lot.

Point Dume is quieter than Zuma Beach because it's farther from the highway. The beach is fairly narrow, so even without a beach wheelchair you can enjoy views of the water from the vicinity of the parking lot or from the asphalt pad near the third restroom building past the parking lot entrance.

### WESTWARD BEACH POINT DUME PRESERVE

#### HOURS

Sunrise to sunset

#### INFORMATION

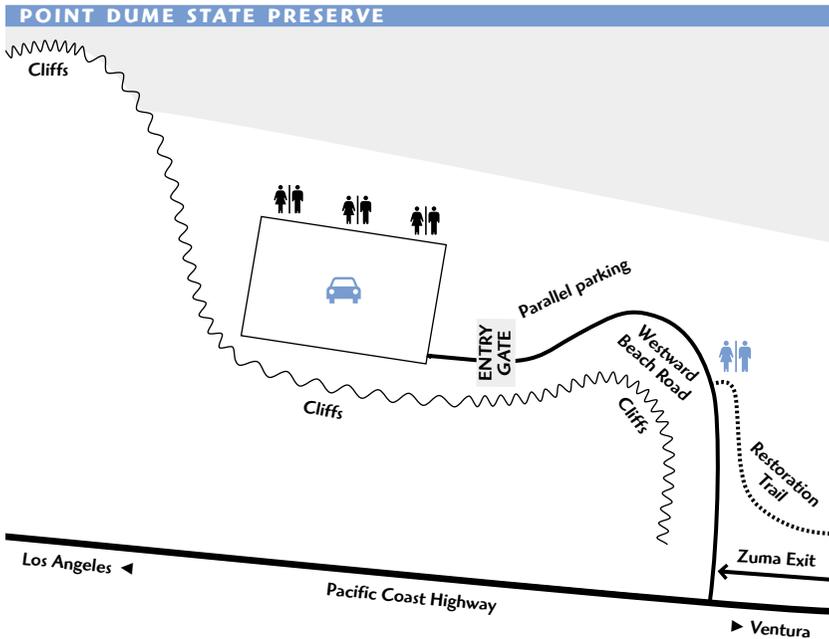
310/457-8143

#### FEES

*Parking*

\$6 parking lot entrance fee

*Free on-street parking*





LARRY WAN

*Beach trail at Point Dume*

A hard-packed gravel road leads from a new parking area off Cliffside Drive to a 500-foot boardwalk just below the summit of Point Dume. The nine-percent grade is manageable for a strong rider, for assisted riders, or motorized wheelchairs. The boardwalk overlooks the State Preserve, where volunteers are removing invasive iceplant to restore native coastal scrub

habitat. It's a good place for whale watching in season.

► **RESTROOMS** An accessible restroom building is at the curve of Westward Beach Road. It has a changing area with a seat, and an outdoor shower with a flip-down seat. Restrooms in the parking lot area are not accessible. The six-space parking lot off Cliffside Drive has two blue spaces.

## *Paradise Cove/Sand Castle Beach*

28128 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

**P**ARADISE COVE is a private beach, open to the public for a hefty fee. It offers a full-service restaurant and a bumpy boardwalk that juts out about 200 feet over the water. There is no level path from the parking lot to the beach.

► **RESTROOMS** The restroom building next to the parking lot is cramped and inaccessible due to tight turns at the entry. The Sand Castle Restaurant has a restroom with more maneuvering room.

### PARADISE COVE SAND CASTLE BEACH

#### **HOURS**

Sunrise to sunset

#### **INFORMATION**

Monday–Friday

8am–5pm

310/457-2511

#### **FEES**

*Parking* \$20

*Walk-in* \$5

## *Malibu Bluffs Community Park*

MALIBU CANYON ROAD, ACROSS FROM PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

**W**IDE LEVEL SIDEWALKS circle soccer and baseball fields and lead to an overlook high on the bluff, where three view scopes are installed, one at wheelchair height.

### MALIBU BLUFFS

#### **PARKING**

Three free blue parking spaces

## *Malibu Lagoon Museum and Lagoon*

23200 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

### **Malibu Lagoon Museum**

The museum inside the Adamson House offers a wonderful and moderately accessible view of local history. Parking for the museum is in the Surfrider Beach lot next to PCH, but if you show your disabled parking placard you can drive through the gate to the Adamson House. If you park in the lot and walk to the house, you can enjoy the gardens and views of the lagoon and read the interpretive signs along the path.

The Adamson House, a registered historical landmark, was built in 1929 as a showcase for Malibu Potteries. From the front drive, a two-inch step leads to a concrete patio and the kitchen courtyard. From there a ramp allows access to the first floor of the house.

From the main courtyard (with uneven but navigable stone paving) you enter a museum of ceramic art and design in the former garage. You must go up a steep two-foot-long ramp to get into the garage.

### MALIBU LAGOON

#### **HOURS**

*Museum grounds and lagoon*

Monday–Friday

8 am to sunset

*Museum*

Wednesday–Saturday

11 am–3 pm

*Free group tours*

Tuesdays by reservation

#### **INFORMATION**

310/456-8432

#### **FEES**

*Museum and grounds*

No charge

*Parking in lot* \$2–6



MALCOLM LUBLINER

*Adamson House Museum*

The rear courtyard (one three-inch step up from the path) is filled with vibrantly colored hand-painted tiles. Look carefully for the spider and web in the metal tracery of the screen doors, and try to find the one asymmetrical tile in the fountain wall. The unofficial record time for finding it is 23 seconds, but many people spot it only after several visits.

A stone path circles the house, but you have to cross some uneven grass in the back.

If you can get down the grassy hill west of the house (the path has steps), you will find a picnic table shaded by large trees close to the beach.

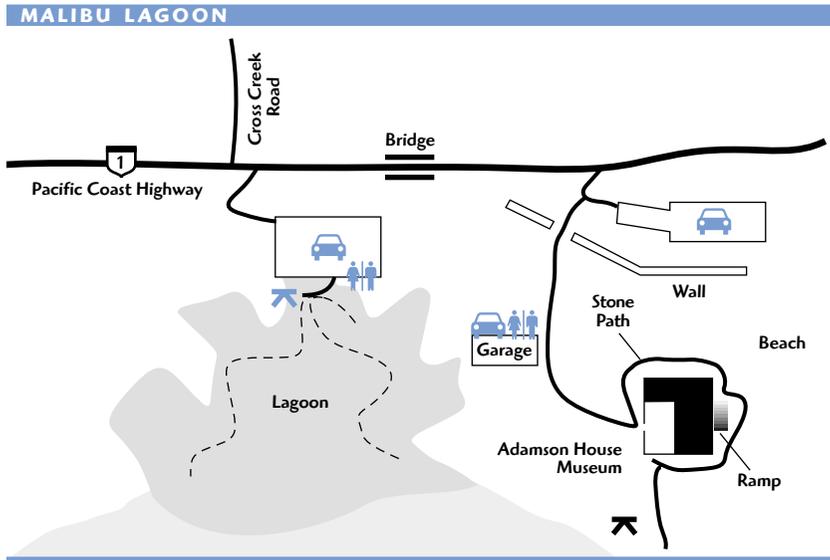
- ▶ **RESTROOMS** Large restrooms with grab bars are in the garage.

## Malibu Lagoon

The entrance to Malibu Lagoon is at Cross Creek Road, about .2-mile west of the museum. From the parking lot (two blue spaces), packed dirt trails lead through a 13-acre wetland preserve, and solid wooden footbridges cross Malibu Creek channels. Displays describe the flora and fauna that live above and below the water line. Bring binoculars for watching birds or whales. Gray whales pass by between late November and May.

The trails are overgrown in some places, but in dry weather most are passable. If you explore shortly after rain, your casters might sink into puddles and your chair can become a muddy mess.

- ▶ **RESTROOMS** A picnic table and two accessible chemical toilets are at the parking lot.



**Malibu Lagoon State Beach**, also known as “Surfrider Beach,” has no accessible facilities or features. Nearby Malibu Pier is closed for restoration. It is scheduled to reopen in 2002.

## *Topanga County Beach*

18500 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

**T**OPANGA COUNTY BEACH is a broad, flat expanse of fine-grained sand. On a clear day you can see Catalina Island 22 miles from shore. Wheelchair access is good. The main entrance is just downcoast of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, but with a disabled placard or plates you can take the second entrance (750 feet farther downcoast) to some beach-level blue spaces near picnic tables on hard-packed dirt. The

### TOPANGA

#### HOURS

8:00 am to dusk

#### INFORMATION

Monday–Thursday

310/305-9503

Lifeguard Headquarters

310/394-3261

#### FEES

*Parking*

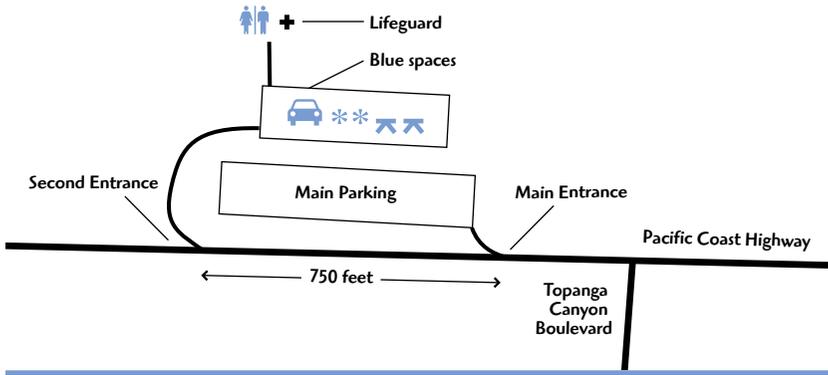
Weekdays \$2–5

Weekends \$6

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available at lifeguard headquarters

TOPANGA COUNTY BEACH



County has placed two beach wheelchairs here. To borrow them, flag down a lifeguard or call the number above.

► **RESTROOMS** Accessible restrooms are at the lifeguard headquarters in front of the beach-level blue spaces.



# *Santa Monica Bay*

WILL ROGERS STATE BEACH TO  
TORRANCE COUNTY BEACH

**M**OST OF THE BEACHES on Santa Monica Bay are wide, flat swaths of golden sand. There's a pier or a boardwalk every few miles, often near shops and restaurants. Outdoor dining, entertainment, and equipment rentals are easy to find, especially in Venice and Hermosa Beach. The Pacific Coast Highway does not adhere to the shoreline, so you may want to pick up a local map.

*Palisades Park overlooks Santa Monica State Beach.*



ERICK MIKITTEN

## *South Bay Bicycle Trail*

**T**HE SOUTH BAY BICYCLE TRAIL is a 22-mile paved path that runs from Will Rogers State Beach to Torrance County Beach. Most of the trail is on the beach, although a few sections are on city streets. The trail connects to all the piers and the Strand in Venice Beach. Bicyclists, joggers, skaters, wheelchair riders, and pedestrians all share the trail, which is 14 feet wide (in most places) with a smooth asphalt or concrete surface. It's busy, but we never saw anyone collide.

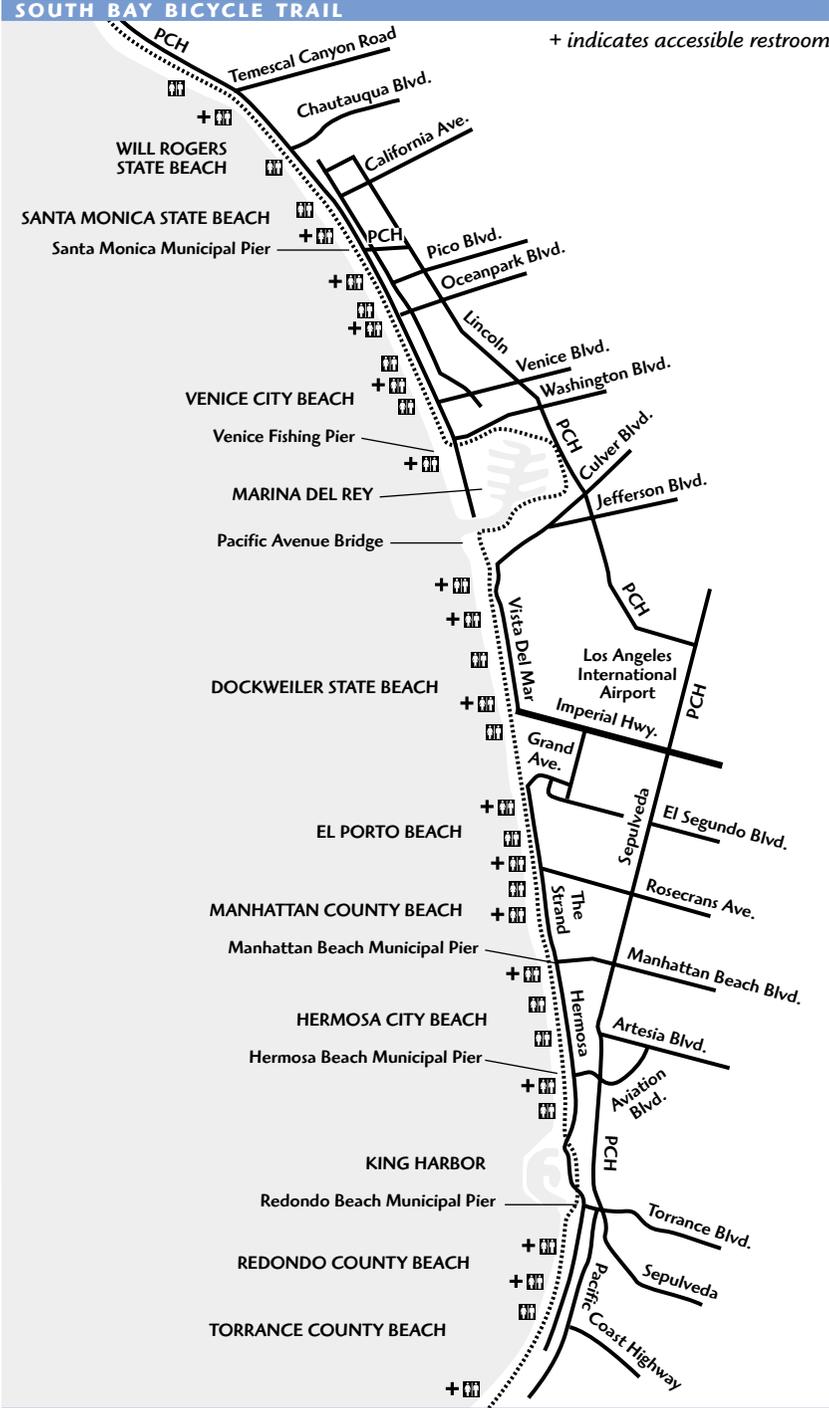
Several rental stands along the trail offer bicycles, rollerskates, and rollerblades. A few have three-wheel recumbent bikes. If you've got a little leg strength, recumbent bikes are a lot of fun. Most of the shop owners will let you try out the bike before you rent it, so feel free to experiment.

We traveled most of the trail with a manual wheelchair and a skateboard. (Skateboards aren't exactly permitted everywhere, but we figured it's not 30-something women who get ticketed.) For the most part, the trip was smooth sailing, although we encountered a few obstacles:

- ***Stairs between the Manhattan Beach section of the trail and Hermosa Beach.*** If you are traveling down the coast from Manhattan Beach, the stairs are on the ocean side and a residential street is directly ahead. Go straight onto the street and look for the alley between the tenth and eleventh houses. The alley is steep and cluttered with planter boxes. If you are traveling up the coast from Hermosa Beach, turn around when you reach the stairs, go back ten houses, and look for the alley.
- ***Narrow sidewalk in Redondo Beach.*** Just south of Hermosa Beach, the trail detours to a commercial street with fast-moving traffic. The sidewalk is very narrow—too narrow for most electric and some manual chairs—and the bike lane on the street feels pretty scary because of the traffic. You might prefer to go a few blocks inland to a friendlier street, then rejoin the trail at the Redondo Pier.

SOUTH BAY BICYCLE TRAIL

+ indicates accessible restroom



## Will Rogers State Beach

16000 BLOCK OF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, PACIFIC PALISADES

**W**ILL ROGERS STATE BEACH is a broad two-mile stretch of beach. There are blue spaces in all three parking lots along Pacific Coast Highway.

### Upcoast Entrance at Gladstone's 4 Fish

This restaurant, a Los Angeles landmark, is perched on a low bluff above the beach. In good weather you can dine on the deck, hang out on the rocks at the edge of the bluff, or take the steep asphalt road down to the beach.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** The parking lot below Gladstone's offers valet parking, but self-parking is allowed. The restaurant's accessible restroom stalls are smaller than standard. The men's room has barely enough room to get a wheelchair into the stall and transfer forward onto the very low toilet. There is one low urinal.

### Central Entrance at Temescal Canyon Road

The South Bay Bicycle Trail begins here and runs south 22 miles to Torrance Beach. There is also a pedestrian-only path north of the parking lot, perfect for a leisurely stroll.

► **RESTROOMS** The restrooms near the lifeguard headquarters are moderately accessible, with one modified stall, but there's a tight turn at the entrance.

#### WILL ROGERS

##### HOURS

8:00 am to sunset

##### INFORMATION

Monday–Thursday

310/305-9503

Lifeguard Headquarters

310/394-3261

##### RESERVATIONS

800/444-PARK

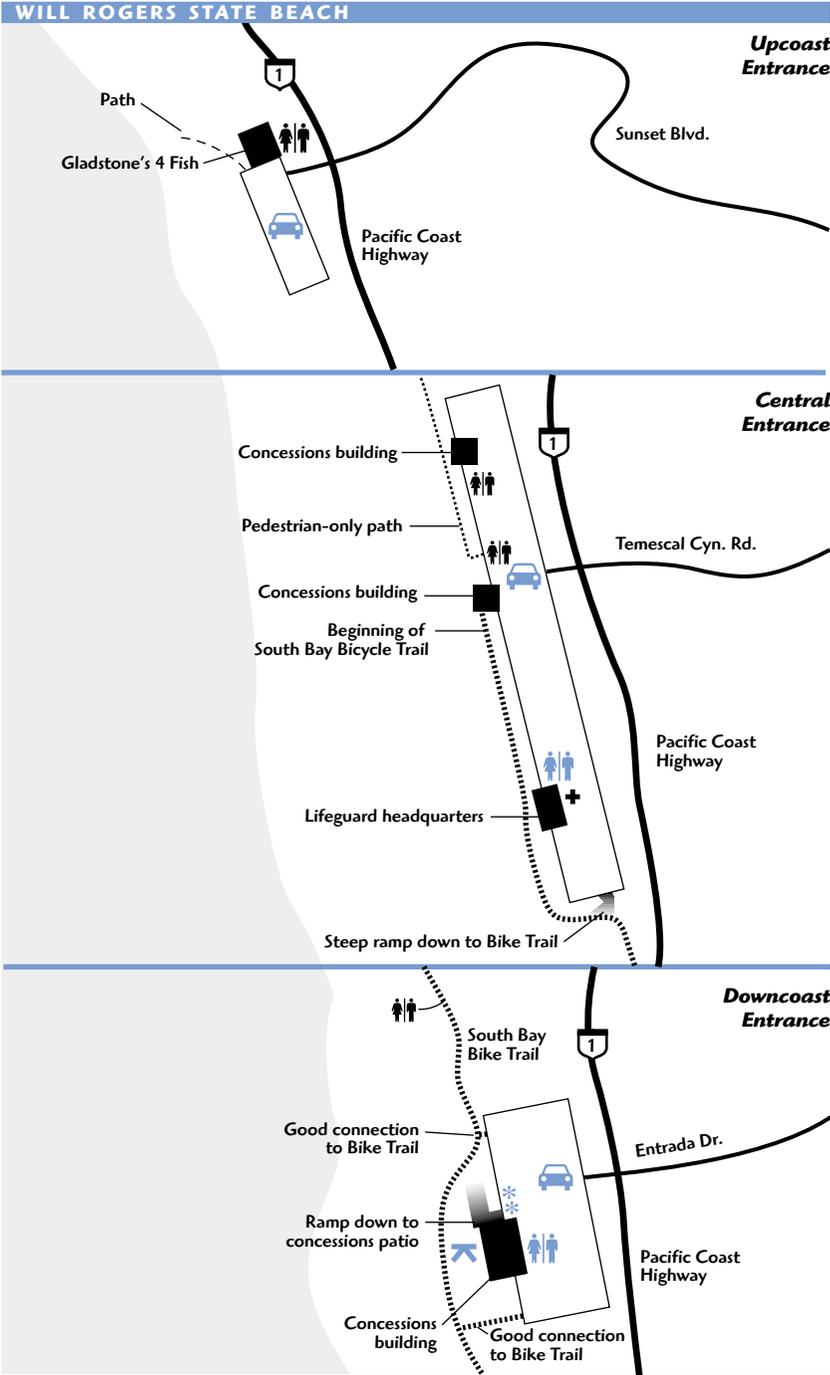
##### FEES

\$2–6 per vehicle

##### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Two at the Chautauqua

Blvd. parking lot





ERICK MIKITTEN

*There is always lots of action on Santa Monica beaches in the summer.*

### Downcoast Entrance at Entrada Drive

The downcoast end of Will Rogers State Beach is a typical flat southern California beach. At this entrance (about three miles downcoast of Gladstone's 4 Fish) you will find picnic tables, a concession stand, and sand volleyball courts. Two beach wheelchairs are available at the parking lot. Sidewalks at each end of the parking lot connect to the South Bay Bicycle Trail. There are benches on concrete along the trail, and a bicycle rental shop with a three-wheel recumbent bike near the concession stand.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** There is a blue space on each side of the concession building. The building has a spacious, single-user restroom with a wide door and locking lever handle.

## Santa Monica

**E**VERY YEAR, 15 million people come to play on Santa Monica's shores. On a sunny day the beach and pier are crowded with families, fishermen, street performers, tourists, surfers, and sunbathers. The city has many wonderful restaurants and attractions, including the Third Street Promenade, an outdoor pedestrian mall.

## *Santa Monica Municipal Pier*

END OF COLORADO AVENUE, SANTA MONICA

**T**HERE ARE TWO distinct sections of the Santa Monica Pier. Pacific Park, at the foot of the pier, is an amusement park with a carousel, bumper cars, arcade games, restaurants, and other attractions. In this area, the pier is made of wooden boards with occasional gaps wide enough to catch a wheelchair caster. This makes for slow and careful travel, but it didn't keep us from enjoying ourselves. Beyond this section, the long fishing pier has a smooth asphalt surface, pleasant for a stroll. The pier is accessible from Colorado Avenue or a series of ramps on the downcoast side of the pier. Access to the pier's fishing platforms is difficult, and the handrails are too high for fishing from a wheelchair.

### SANTA MONICA PIER

#### INFORMATION

310/458-8900

ERICK MIKITEN



*Santa Monica Pier*

## Santa Monica State Beach

OFF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, SANTA MONICA

**S**ANTA MONICA STATE BEACH offers many wheelchair-riding adventures. The South Bay Bicycle Trail makes travel easy. Two beach wheelchairs are available at the lifeguard station, and there's a bike rental shop at the foot of the pier, where you can try some different wheels.

The Promenade is a pedestrian-only sidewalk at the back of the beach. It begins just south of the pier and runs all the way to Venice Beach. Restaurants and food stands are clustered around the pier, and the nearby picnic tables are popular for chess games.

On the beach upcoast of the pier, there's an 11-foot-wide boardwalk. During the summer, when the beach is at its widest, this boardwalk runs about halfway to the water.

### SANTA MONICA BEACH

#### INFORMATION

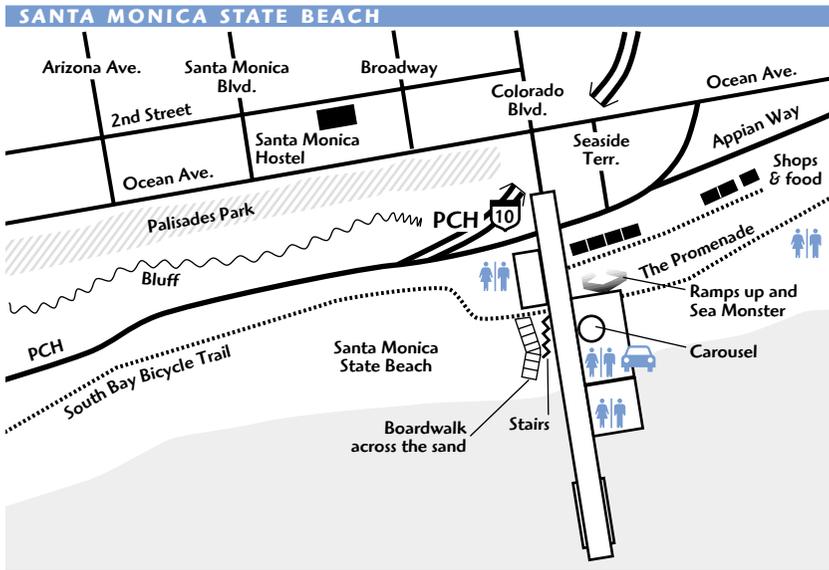
Lifeguard headquarters  
310/394-3261

#### FEES

*Parking*  
\$5–8 per vehicle

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available at lifeguard station



- ▶ **PARKING** Park on the pier itself at the end of Colorado Boulevard or in the beach-level lot upcoast of the pier. Both have blue spaces.
- ▶ **RESTROOMS** Restrooms below the pier have large stalls with grab bars and high toilets. There are also accessible stalls in the second restroom building downcoast of the pier adjacent to the bike trail.

## *HI-Santa Monica Hostel* *(Hostelling International/AYH)*

1436 2ND STREET, SANTA MONICA TRAVEL STORE AT 1434 2ND STREET

**O** P E N T O T R A V E L E R S of all ages, the HI-Santa Monica Hostel offers comfortable accommodations and a quiet retreat just two blocks from the beach, with excellent wheelchair access. The dorm rooms have plenty of space to maneuver, and the lower bunk beds are at a comfortable height. There's a cool and comfortable courtyard with a fountain, trees, tables and chairs, and a barbecue. The restrooms also have very good

*Santa Monica Hostel*



access. Each shower room has a stall with a fold-down wooden seat, grab bars, and a hand-held shower. Most of the cabinets and counter tops in the self-service kitchen are three feet high, but there is one low counter, open underneath, with a sink and a stove with front-mounted controls. The hostel also has lockers, a game room, a library with travel information, and a laundry room with standard top-loading washers. You may meet people from many countries here.

#### HI-SANTA MONICA HOSTEL

##### HOURS

Dawn to dusk for day use

##### INFORMATION

310/393-9913

##### RESERVATIONS

800/444-PARK

##### FEES

About \$21 a night for a bed in the dorm, surcharge for family rooms and private suites

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## *Palisades Park*

OCEAN AVENUE BETWEEN COLORADO AVENUE AND ADELAIDE DRIVE, SANTA MONICA

**P**ALISADES PARK is on a bluff overlooking Santa Monica Beach. There are plenty of benches and shady places to rest, and a two-mile paved path that weaves among the palm trees. The Palisades Park

Shuffleboard Club and the Senior Citizens Recreation Center are near Broadway. Most of the park is wheelchair accessible, but there are steep slopes where California Avenue bisects the park, and occasional cross-slopes throughout the park. Overpasses across Pacific Coast Highway to the beach have stairs at each end.

A Visitor Assistance Stand on the west side of Ocean Avenue at Arizona Street (open from 10 to 4) has free maps and brochures, film, and postcards. The counter is very high, but you can get service at the back door.

► **RESTROOMS** There are restrooms with large wheelchair-accessible stalls with handrails, raised toilets, and low hand dryers at San Vicente Boulevard, Idaho Avenue, and California Avenue.

#### PALISADES PARK

##### HOURS

5 am to midnight

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## Crescent Bay Park

OCEAN AVENUE AND BAY STREET, SANTA MONICA

**I**N THIS SMALL PARK half a mile south of the Santa Monica Pier, lawns and yucca plants surround a picnic area shaded by a wooden trellis. Picnic tables are accessible through four-foot-wide openings in the low wall.

A smooth wooden boardwalk begins at the restrooms near the parking entrance and runs about halfway across the beach. It is less crowded than the one north of the Santa Monica Pier. A paved boardwalk with separate lanes for pedestrians and bikers and skaters runs several miles through the park.

► **RESTROOMS** The restroom at the north end of the parking lot has one narrow, poorly accessible stall with hand rails and a raised toilet. Restrooms at the south end are not accessible.

► **PARKING** Blue spaces are at the seaward side of the parking lot. There are occasional breaks in the curb between the parking lot and the bike and pedestrian paths. There is also short-term parking in the two south beach lots. Metered parking can be found on Ocean Avenue and Bay Street, but there's a steep hill on Bay Street leading to the park.

### CRESCENT BAY PARK

#### HOURS

6 am to 11 pm

#### FEES

*Parking*

\$5 per vehicle

## Venice District

BETWEEN OCEAN PARK AND MARINA DEL REY, LOS ANGELES

**I**N 1904 cigarette magnate Abbot Kinney created an amusement park, “Venice of America,” digging a network of canals into 160 acres of marshland. By the 1920s, stagnant waters had become a health hazard and all but four canals were paved over. In the 1950s, Venice became a neighborhood of artists and bohemians. It still retains that character, even though high rents and real estate prices have displaced many locals.

## Venice Beach/The Strand

**T**HE VENICE STRAND (Ocean Front walk) is *the* place on the Los Angeles coast to see and be seen. This beachfront sidewalk is lined with shops and restaurants, and all who use it are onstage. With street performers, bodybuilders, and beach bums, there's hardly a dull day on the Strand. The Strand is for pedestrians; bicyclists and skaters are supposed to stick to the South Bay Bicycle Trail farther out on the beach.

The Strand begins west of the Rose Avenue parking lot. The heart of the activity is near Windward Avenue. Skaters and skateboarders gather amid throngs of people. Enormous bodybuilders work out at an outdoor gym called "Muscle Beach." Staring is legal in Venice, so stop and watch. Or if you're really brave, purchase a day pass at the office next to the barbell-shaped building. In addition to weightlifting equipment, Muscle Beach has basketball, squash, and handball on wheelchair-accessible courts.

### *Along the Venice boardwalk*



MALCOLM LUBLINER

### VENICE BEACH

#### INFORMATION

310/305-9546

Lifeguard Headquarters  
310/577-5700

#### FEES

*Summer parking*

Weekdays \$5–6.75,

Weekends \$7–9.50

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

At lifeguard headquarters  
near Venice Boulevard  
parking lot



MALCOLM LUBLINER

*A basketball game on the Strand*

The gymnastics equipment is on sand with no accessible surface. There are occasional competitions on an outdoor stage.

## Venice Pier

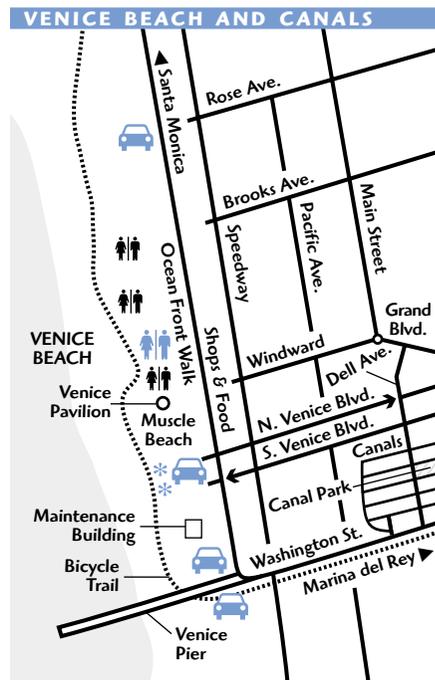
**T**HE 1,300-FOOT Venice Pier, built in 1963, was falling to pieces by the 1980s. It was closed and scheduled for demolition in

1986. Venice residents rallied to the cause, and after years of perseverance the pier was restored and reopened in 1997. The restored pier is fully accessible, with special cutouts for fishing from wheelchairs.

► **BICYCLES** The Spokes and Blades shop near Washington Street has a recumbent three-wheel bicycle for rent.

► **RESTROOMS** There is one accessible restroom near Windward Avenue, and another near Brooks Avenue. The door at the Brooks Avenue restroom opens directly to the outdoors and there is no lock.

► **PARKING** Parking can be difficult at Venice Beach. If you find a space on the street, you're lucky. Otherwise try for a blue space in the lots at Washington Street or Rose Avenue. There is also a blue space on the north corner of Pacific Avenue at Washington Street.



## *Canal Park*

LINNIE CANAL AND DELL AVENUE, VENICE

**C**ANAL PARK is a small strip of uneven rolling grass and sand next to Linnie Canal, one of four canals remaining from “Venice of America.” The footbridges over the canal are very steep, so we suggest driving in on Dell Avenue (off 28th Street). We watched the waterfowl for a few minutes, then drove around the neighborhood looking at the odd assortment of expensive new houses mixed with modest ones from eras past.

### CANAL PARK

#### HOURS

5 am to 10:30 pm



# Marina del Rey

MARINA DEL REY TO DOCKWEILER STATE BEACH

**M**ARINA DEL REY boasts of having the world's largest man-made small-craft harbor. Built in wetlands in 1960, the main channel is 18–24 feet deep, 1,000 feet wide, and one mile long. Up to 7,500 boats are tucked into row after row of docks.

It's easy to feel lost when driving around the marina. You can't rely on the shoreline for orientation because buildings often hide it from view, and the shoreline changes direction every few hundred yards. Just remember you can't go too far wrong if you stay between Washington Street, Lincoln Boulevard, and Fiji Way.

## *On the South Bay Bicycle Trail at Dockweiler State Beach*



MALCOLM LUBLINER

## Marina del Rey Information Center

CORNER OF ADMIRALTY WAY AND MINDANAO WAY

**T**HE MARINA DEL REY Information Center stocks maps and brochures. The Center is on the South Bay Bicycle Trail. Look for a stucco building with a tile roof and a small lighthouse-shaped cupola.

► **RESTROOMS** Restrooms are outside the building. They have narrow front-transfer stalls with grab bars. The men's room has a low urinal. The entrance doors are heavy, and the 90-degree turn into the stalls might be too tight for a large chair.

### MARINA DEL REY

**HOURS**

9 am to 5 pm

**INFORMATION**

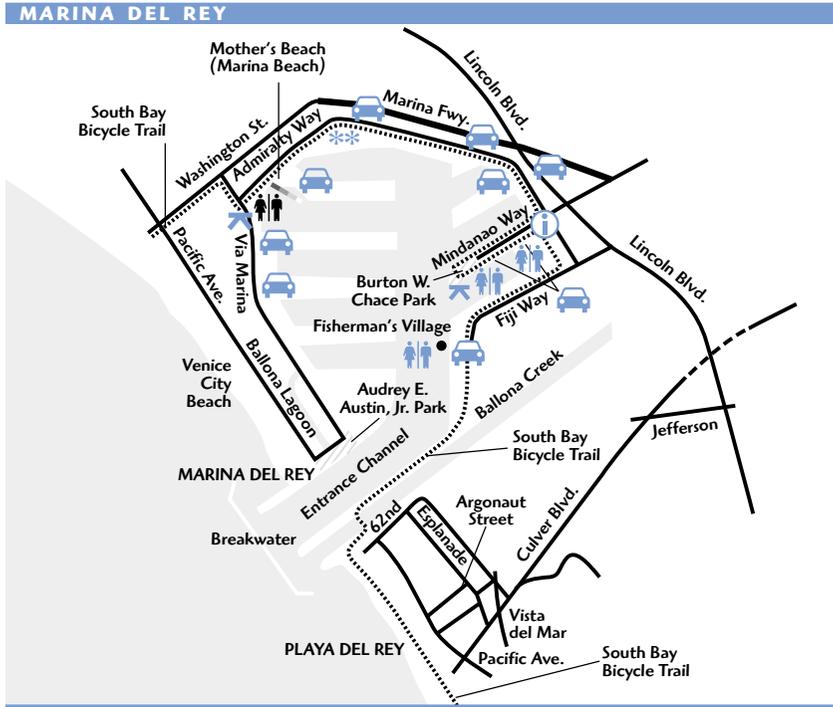
310/305-9546

**FEES**

\$2 parking in all County lots

**BEACH WHEELCHAIRS**

Available at Mother's Beach



## *Audrey E. Austin Jr. Memorial Park/ Ballona Lagoon Walkway*

**BOTH SIDES OF VIA MARINA**

**A**UDREY E. AUSTIN JR. MEMORIAL PARK and Ballona Lagoon Walkway are narrow parks alongside waterways. Memorial Park lies between a parking lot and the entrance channel to Marina del Rey. It's a great place for watching boats. Across the street from the Memorial Park parking lot, the Ballona Lagoon Walkway runs alongside a remnant of the wetlands that were diked and filled in the 1960s. This is a great bird-watching spot.

Once slated for conversion to boat docks, Ballona Lagoon was preserved through the efforts of local citizens, the Coastal Conservancy, and the City of Los Angeles. From the walkway you might see blue herons, egrets, and various small shorebirds, including the endangered California least tern, which nests in a fenced enclosure on Venice Beach. Watch out for gaps between the pavement and the guardrail, and drainage grates with slots wide enough to catch a caster. There's also a pair of steps about a third of a mile down the path.

*Ballona Lagoon is a great bird-watching spot.*



KEN GARDINER

► **PARKING** A metered parking lot on Via Marina has blue spaces. Parking is scarce on weekends when the crowd from Venice Beach overflows to Marina del Rey. There are no restrooms at these parks.

## *Mother's Beach (Marina Beach)*

PANAY WAY AND PALAWAN WAY

**M**OTHER'S BEACH is a small swimming beach on the interior of the marina where there is no surf. The main attraction is a wheelchair-accessible ramp that runs right into the water. You can borrow a beach wheelchair from the lifeguards if you want to avoid getting saltwater on your own. The ramp is about 33 inches wide and 150 feet long. The hand-rail is made of two-by-ten boards. Depending on the tide, the far end of the ramp will be a few inches or a few feet underwater.

Mother's Beach has picnic tables on pavement next to metal stands for portable barbecues. A concession stand and a soft drink machine are north of the restroom building. At the south end of the beach near Panay Way there's a play structure with an accessible rubber surface at the swings and the slide.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** There are blue spaces in the lot at Panay Way, and in the lot off Admiralty Way. Restrooms have three-foot-wide stalls with grab bars mounted too high, and the flush valve is hard to reach. There are spacious changing areas in the restrooms.

*Using the handrails on this ramp at Mother's Beach you can take your wheelchair into the water to a comfortable depth.*

LARRY WAN





LARRY WAN

*Mother's Beach*

## *Burton W. Chace Park*

MINDANAO WAY

**T**HIS WELL-GROOMED, pretty park overlooks the marina. It has shade trees, rolling lawns, sheltered picnic tables, barbecues, and a snack bar. It is a good place for a walk or a jog along the South Bay Bicycle Trail. Public fishing docks have been built along the edge of the park, and there's a dog run next to the parking lot. The park office displays historical photographs of Santa Monica, Playa del Rey, and the canals of Venice in 1905, when they were new.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** There are blue spaces in the parking lot. Restrooms near the picnic shelter have front transfer stalls with one grab bar, but the stalls are too small to close the door with a wheelchair inside. Restrooms at the park office have twist doorknobs and front transfer stalls with two grab bars.



LARRY WAN

## Fisherman's Village

FIJI WAY

**F**ISHERMAN'S VILLAGE is a collection of shops along some docks on the marina. The shops are accessible except for the occasional cramped aisle. You can buy fish and chips, clothing, kites, tee shirts, and souvenirs. There are fishing platforms on the docks.

Several tour boats depart from the docks at Fisherman's

Village. We took a half-hour cruise around Marina del Rey on the Sunset Hornblower. Boarding was awkward: there was a steep ramp down to the boat, a four-inch step onto the boat, and another three-inch step to the seating area. Other tour boats may be different, so inquire at the counter. To arrange a private party or charter call 310/ 301-9900.

► **RESTROOMS** Shanghai Red's Restaurant at the south end of Fisherman's Village has an accessible restroom. All other restrooms at Fisherman's Village are inaccessible, even the one marked "Employees Only. For Handicapped Access and Public Access, Please See Store Owners for Keys."

## Dockweiler State Beach

WEST OF VISTA DEL MAR AT IMPERIAL HIGHWAY, EL SEGUNDO

**T**HIS BROAD 255-acre beach lies beneath the flight path of Los Angeles International Airport. The main entrance is on Vista del Mar at Imperial Highway. An RV campground is left of the main entrance, a day-use area is to the right. Airplane noise is a drawback, but the beach is close to amenities in Manhattan Beach and Marina del Rey.

The RV campground has three large blue spaces with seven-foot-wide access aisles and hookups for water, electricity, and sewer lines. Each space has its own barbecue and picnic table, usually on an asphalt surface. There is a coin-operated laundromat with top-loading machines in the building at the eastern end of the campground. Tent camping is not permitted at Dockweiler.

The South Bay Bicycle Trail runs through Dockweiler's day-use area and campground. Dockweiler is about midway on the 22-mile trail. A jog to Manhattan Beach Pier, 3.5 miles south, would make a nice day trip.

Dockweiler State Beach Recreation Center is a secondary entrance to the beach, on Vista del Mar south of the main entrance, .2 mile past Hyperion. The public parking

## DOCKWEILER

### HOURS

Campground office  
6 am to 10 pm

### INFORMATION

310/305-9503  
Lifeguard Headquarters  
310/372-2166

### FEES

*Day use*  
\$2 at the Recreation Center  
\$6 at the main entrance  
*RV camping*  
\$12–\$22 depending on site  
*Summer parking*  
Weekdays \$5–6  
Weekends \$6.75

### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Two available near the main entrance

### Wheelies on Dockweiler State Beach



MALCOLM LUBNER

lot sign is small and hard to find. There's a parking lot and a long ramp down to the beach, bike trail, and accessible restrooms.

▶ **RESTROOMS** Restrooms at Dockweiler State Beach Recreation Center have spacious accessible stalls with grab bars. The best restrooms in the campground are behind the campground office building. They have hand-held showers with flip-down seats, and large stalls with rear grab bars. Restrooms in the day-use area north of the main entrance are not accessible.



# Manhattan Beach

INFORMATION: 310/802-5000

**M**ANHATTAN BEACH is primarily a residential community with two miles of glorious beaches south of Los Angeles International Airport. The hilly topography reflects the original sand dunes that in many other locations were bulldozed. There is one relatively level street, Manhattan Avenue, which is great for window shopping. It is not far from the shore, and runs parallel to it. The cross streets tend to get very steep as they drop down toward the ocean. The beach itself is a perfect stretch of golden sand with beach-level parking lots and several great wheelchair riding adventures.



MALCOLM LUBLINER

## *Manhattan County Beach*

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**M**ANHATTAN COUNTY BEACH is a classic southern California beach with volleyball, surfers, and sun-bathers. The South Bay Bicycle Trail runs through the beach and is a great place to jog. If you want to avoid bicyclists, try the pedestrian-only “Strand” just above the bike path. Ramps connect the Strand to the bike path every few blocks, although occasionally you may encounter a three-inch curb. Two beach wheelchairs are available at lifeguard headquarters near the Rosecrans Avenue parking lot.

### MANHATTAN COUNTY BEACH

#### **HOURS**

7 am–10 pm

#### **INFORMATION**

Lifeguard Headquarters  
310/372-2166

#### **RESERVATIONS**

800/444-PARK

#### **FEES**

*Parking free in blue spaces*

#### **BEACH WHEELCHAIRS**

Available

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*Manhattan Beach Pier*

## *Roundhouse Marine Studies Lab and Aquarium at Manhattan Beach Pier*

**T**HE ROUNDHOUSE, a small building at the tip of Manhattan Beach Pier, is home to a casual and informative exhibit of Santa Monica Bay's native flora and fauna. Docents are eager to talk about the creatures in the aquaria and touch tanks. Programs for children are offered, including a "Sleep with the Sharks" slumber party, Sea Story time, and Discovery Hour, so call before you visit to find out what's going on. The Roundhouse is available by reservation for birthday parties or field trips.

### ROUNDHOUSE MARINE STUDIES LAB

#### HOURS

*Weekdays*

3 pm to sunset

*Weekends*

10 am to sunset

#### INFORMATION

310/379-8117

#### FEES

\$2 donation recommended

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Enter the beach/pier parking lot at the end of either Rosecrans Avenue or Manhattan Beach Boulevard. Blue spaces are at the north end of the lot and at the base of the pier. Restrooms along the bike path have good access, but the tile in the showers is slippery. The Roundhouse has accessible restrooms and a lift to the second floor.

## *Hermosa Beach*

**H**ERMOSA BEACH has two miles of beach with a flat stretch of the South Bay Bicycle Trail, a pier, and a pleasant shopping district. A wheelchair-riding resident told us "everybody comes here to work out," so work out we did. With a pair of rented rollerblades and a manual chair, we took a swift 12-wheel cruise on the trail. Bicyclists and joggers were respectful

### HERMOSA BEACH

#### HOURS

7 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

Lifeguard Headquarters

310/372-2166

#### FEES

Parking free in blue spaces

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available at lifeguard headquarters



MALCOLM LUBLINER

company, and pedestrians kept the overall speed down. One mile south of the pier, the trail leaves the beach and becomes a bike lane on a busy street with a cross-slope. About .75 mile north of the pier (just before Manhattan Beach) the trail is interrupted by steps. (See p. 18 for detours.)

Hermosa Beach Municipal Pier at the end of Pier Avenue is popular for fishing because it's longer than many others on Santa Monica Bay.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** There are blue spaces in the parking garage on 13th Street. Ramps to the restrooms are steep, and the stalls have

only minor access modifications. The first restroom building west of the pier has a large stall with grab bars. There are front transfer stalls in the restroom building at 22nd Street.



## *Redondo Beach*

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**R**EDONDO'S MAIN ATTRACTIONS are a broad flat beach and piers with restaurants, funky shops, bumper cars, arcade games, and opportunities for recreational fishing.



MALCOLM LUBLINER

## *Redondo Beach Municipal Pier, International Boardwalk, and Sport Fishing Pier*

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**R**EDONDO BEACH MUNICIPAL PIER is accessed from the parking garage at the ocean end of Torrance Boulevard. Blue spaces are on Level Two in area six, next to a sidewalk at the water's edge. The sidewalk leads to either end of the horseshoe-shaped pier. Shops on the pier sell tee shirts, kites, fast foods, and seafood. (Check the back of your parking ticket for coupons. Ours had one for toe rings. That's right, toe rings.) We walked out onto the horseshoe-shaped pier, faced inland, and watched the backs of emerald green waves rolling onto the shore.

The bumper cars and arcade games are on the "International Boardwalk," a sidewalk adjacent to the lower level of the parking garage. There's a ramp down to the Boardwalk at the north end of Redondo Pier, and an elevator at the north end of the parking garage.



MALCOLM LUBLINER



MALCOLM LUBLINER

The South Bay Bicycle Trail passes through Level Two of the parking garage. We followed it north toward Hermosa Beach. About a quarter-mile from the parking garage, there is a small wooden sport-fishing pier where you can rent equipment and buy bait and fishing licenses. Although it's a bumpy ride on a wheelchair, we liked this rustic old pier with its diner and tackle shop, a pier more attractive for fishing than for sightseeing.

## Redondo County Beach

**S**OUTH OF THE PARKING garage, the South Bay Bicycle Trail descends gradually onto Redondo County Beach. The bicycle trail is the easiest entrance since the next mile of beach is accessible only by stairs down the cliffs. The beach itself is another broad stretch of golden sand.

► **RESTROOMS** A large unisex restroom with grab bars is on level one of the Redondo Beach Pier parking garage behind the elevator at International Boulevard. Restrooms at the Sport Fishing Pier are not accessible. Most restroom buildings on Redondo County Beach are accessed by 1:12 ramps. They have large stalls and grab bars.

### REDONDO COUNTY BEACH

#### HOURS

7 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

Lifeguard Headquarters  
310/372-2166

#### FEES

Parking free in blue spaces

## Torrance County Beach

WEST OF PASEO DEL MAR, TORRANCE

**T**HE SEA CLIFFS and wide swath of sand of Redondo State Beach continue along the shore of Torrance. The South Bay Bicycle Trail is the main attraction for a wheelchair rider. There are blue spaces and a long 1:12 ramp down to the beach near the entrance at Playa del Rey and Paseo de la Concha.

Surfers love this beach, especially in winter, because the west-facing shore has large swells. Dolphins seem to like it too. We saw several playing just beyond the surf zone.

► **RESTROOMS** The restroom building at the end of the ramp has a front transfer stall. Full-sized accessible stalls with grab bars can be found in the next restroom building north on the bike trail.

### TORRANCE COUNTY BEACH

#### HOURS

Dawn to dusk for day use

#### INFORMATION

Lifeguard Headquarters  
310/372-2166

#### FEES

*Parking*

Weekdays \$1  
Weekends \$6

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available at lifeguard headquarters

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# *Southern Los Angeles County*

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA TO LONG BEACH

**P**ALOS VERDES PENINSULA juts into the ocean between Santa Monica Bay and San Pedro Bay. The Pacific Coast Highway bypasses the peninsula, so if you want to explore its 15 miles of craggy and dramatic shore, you'll have to detour onto Palos Verdes Drive.



MALCOLM LUBLINER

*Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific*

## Wayfarers Chapel

5755 PALOS VERDES DRIVE SOUTH

**T**HIS ARCHITECTURAL GEM, designed by Lloyd Wright (Frank's son), stands on a hill overlooking the ocean. It was inspired by the natural cathedrals of California's redwood forests. The chapel walls and ceiling are glass. It's not the structure of the building that commands your attention; it's the trunks of the trees outside the building, framed so beautifully by the windowpanes. Wayfarers Chapel is especially lovely in the rain when rivulets trickle down the panes.

### WAYFARERS CHAPEL

**INFORMATION**  
310/377-1650

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** There are blue spaces in the parking lot, and a new wheelchair ramp to the chapel. A new visitor center at the top of the driveway has restrooms with wide stalls with five-foot turning radius and grab bars. Sinks have clear space below.



ERICK MIKITTEN

## Ocean Trails

OFF PALOS VERDES DRIVE SOUTH AT  
OCEAN TRAILS DRIVE OR LA ROTUNDA DRIVE

**O**CEAN TRAILS is a private golf course on a bluff above the ocean. There is public access through 90 acres of restored coastal sage scrub around the golf course. We intended to make our visit quick, but got caught up in the birdsong and the plants and spent several hours. The terrain is moderately steep, but the pavement is scored to give golf carts (and wheelchairs) good traction. Not all of the trails are for pedestrians, so follow the signs. There are some hard-packed dirt trails at the edge of the bluff, and although we encountered a few rough spots, these trails are generally smooth and easy to travel.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** The main entrance at Ocean Trails Drive has blue spaces and accessible restrooms in the clubhouse. We preferred the quieter entrance off La Rotunda, which also has blue spaces and excellent restrooms.

## White's Point Beach/ Royal Palms County Beach

WHERE WESTERN AVENUE MEETS THE COAST  
AND BECOMES PASEO DEL MAR

**T**HIS IS ONE OF THE BEST spots for a family retreat. A park on the bluffs has convenient wheelchair access and sweeping views of Catalina Island. The paths are smooth and level, and the entire children's play structure has a wheelchair-accessible surface. Look for the historic photographs mounted in a case near the entrance. In the 1920s and '30s, the beach below was the site of a hotel and spa popular with Japanese-Americans. You can still see the ruins on the beach.

### WHITE'S POINT ROYAL PALMS BEACH

#### HOURS

310/305-9503

#### FEES

*Blufftop parking*

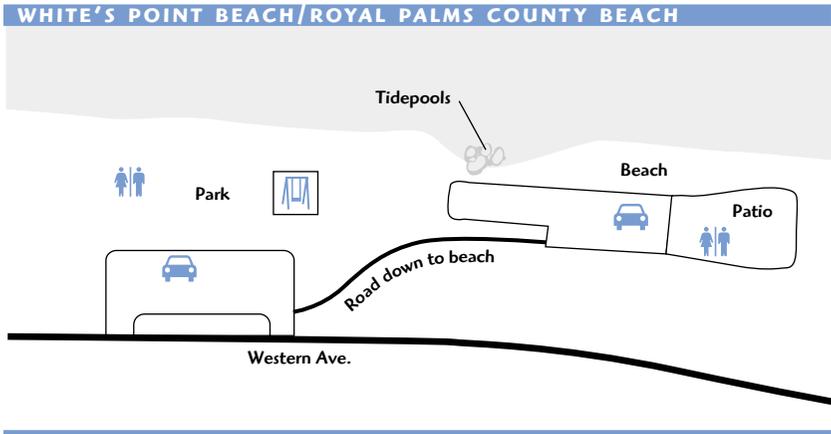
Weekdays, free

Weekends, \$2

*Royal Palms lot*

Weekdays, \$2

Weekends, \$5–6



The paved road to the beach is steep, so it's best to drive down. The large patio at the upcoast end of the beach was once the dance floor of the Royal Palms Recreation Center. Now the area is a lovely picnic spot shaded by palm trees and furnished with benches. A stream (dry in the summer) runs down the cliff face, under the patio, and out to the ocean.

White's Point, at the downcoast end of the beach is less accessible. Boulders line the shore and surround the ruins of mineral baths. In 1933 an earthquake closed the warm-water vent. There are tidepools among the rocks and ruins, but you'd have to leave your chair behind and climb over the boulders to see them.



MALCOLM LUBLINER

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS**

There are six blue spaces in the lot at the beach, none in the blufftop lot. Park restrooms have wide stalls and grab bars.

*Royal Palms playground with accessible surface*

## *Marine Exchange Vessel Traffic Center*

ANGELS GATE PARK, GAFFEY STREET NEAR 36TH STREET, SAN PEDRO

**T**HE MARINE EXCHANGE VESSEL TRAFFIC CENTER controls all ocean traffic within a 25-mile radius. If you call ahead, you can arrange to tour the lookout on the second floor, which has sweeping views and three-foot-wide radar screens that show the location of vessels. Boats 131 feet and longer are required to identify themselves via radio. Smaller boats, called “passive users,” identify themselves only when they’re in distress. It’s the traffic center that answers the call of “Mayday, Mayday” on Channel 16 and helps the Coast Guard find the boat. One interesting fact: The traffic center identifies the boat on the radar screen by tracing the direction of its radio signal. If the call comes in on a cell phone instead of ship-to-shore radio, there is no way to pinpoint the boat.

The nearby Marine Mammal Care Center is also worth a visit.

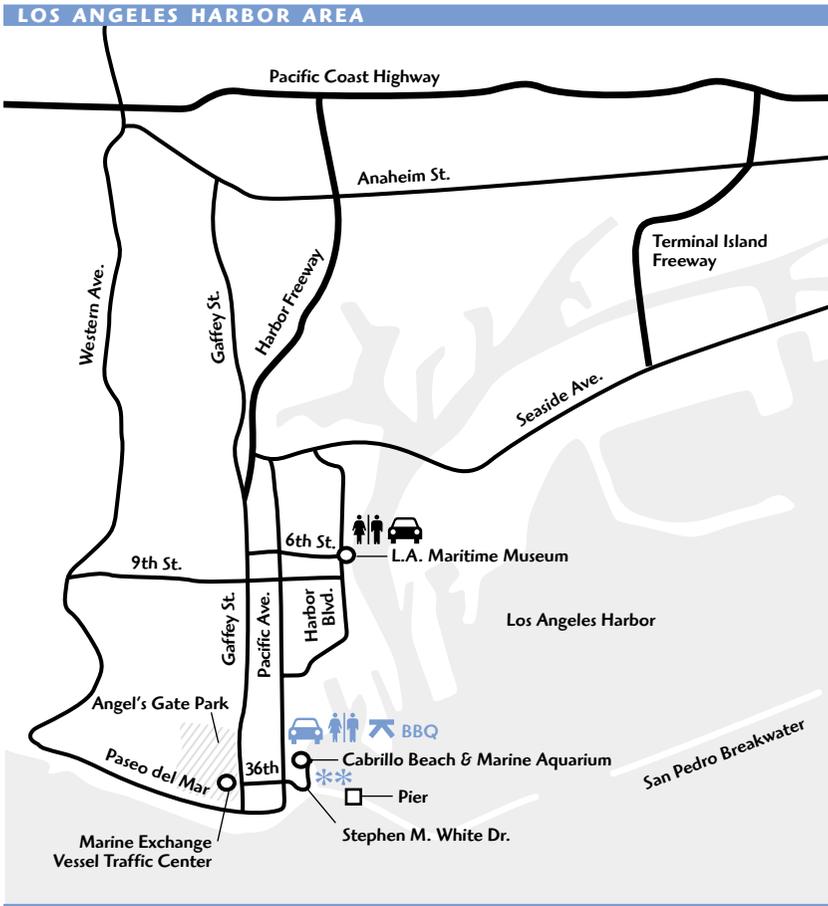
► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** To reach the traffic center from the main gate of Angels Gate Park, take the first right onto Leary Merrian Drive. Follow it to the top of the hill and take the first left. The parking lot has blue spaces. Ring the doorbell if the doors are locked. There’s an elevator to the second floor, and a spacious restroom with grab bars on the first floor.

**MARINE EXCHANGE  
VESSEL TRAFFIC CENTER**

**INFORMATION**  
310/832-6411

## Los Angeles Harbor

**T**HE SOUTHERN Los Angeles County shoreline is dominated by the 7,000-acre Los Angeles Harbor. San Pedro, the last tourist-friendly town on the harbor’s north edge, has noteworthy educational facilities and a small beach. Then it’s a drive around the harbor’s 28-mile industrial shoreline to Long Beach, a recently refreshed vacation destination.



## *Cabrillo Beach and Marine Aquarium*

EAST END OF STEVEN M. WHITE DRIVE OFF PACIFIC AVENUE, SAN PEDRO

**T**HE BREAKWATER that shelters Los Angeles Harbor also quiets the water at Cabrillo Beach. Despite its location on the edge of an industrial landscape, this beach is crowded even on weekdays when busloads of schoolchildren arrive on field trips. The Aquarium is the main attraction for wheelchair riders. The beach itself is small, but it makes a decent picnic spot. You can also fish from a pier off the breakwater.

**CABRILLO AQUARIUM****HOURS**

Tuesday–Friday

Noon–5 pm

Saturday–Sunday

10 am–5 pm

**INFORMATION**

310/548-7562

**FEES***Admission*

\$2 donation recommended

\$1 for seniors and children

Free with parking receipt

*Parking*Weekdays: Free with  
disabled placard

Weekends and holidays: \$4

**BEACH WHEELCHAIRS**

Three available

**Cabrillo Marine Aquarium**

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium is what a school biology lab should be: an adventure. Life-size models and skeletons of whales and dolphins hang from the ceiling, and a wave tank shows how sand is pushed up onto the beach. Aquariums and touch tanks display marine life. Enthusiastic docents—some of whom are students—encourage visitors to participate in the exhibits. The tidepool touch tank holds sea stars, anemones, urchins, and a leopard shark (out of reach). Be sure to check out the “Aquaculture Research Lab,” where Garibaldi (one of California’s state fish) are raised and jellyfish are hatched and raised on brine shrimp.

The Aquarium is interesting for people of all ages. It’s especially great for wheel-

chair-riding children because the exhibits are at a kid’s eye level. Except for a long gradual slope from the ticket booth to the exhibit hall, wheelchair access is very easy.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Free parking with disabled placard, except weekends and holidays. Blue parking spaces are at the right side of the Aquarium. Aquarium restrooms have large accessible stalls, push-button faucets, and a baby-changing table in the women’s room. Beach restrooms are smaller and less accessible.

*The Cabrillo Coastal Park Trail leads to tidepools at Point Fermin.*

GARY FLORIN/CABRILLO MARINE AQUARIUM





GARY FLORINI/CABRILLO MARINE AQUARIUM

*Celebrating the opening of the Cabrillo Coastal Park Trail*

### **Cabrillo Beach and Fishing Pier**

The new Cabrillo Coastal Park Trail includes a fully accessible 300-foot boardwalk and over 1,200 feet of concrete trails. It leads from the aquarium to the tidepools at the Point Fermin Marine Life Refuge.

As you face the shore, the breakwater reaches out to the right, and Los Angeles Harbor is in view to the left. A concrete sidewalk runs along the edge of the parking lot (beware of the 12-inch drop-off between the pavement and the sand). Picnic tables and barbecues are on somewhat firm sand, and play structures are on soft sand. There are no access features across the sand to the water.

The sidewalk continues up onto the breakwater. It's steep for the first 400 feet, then flattens out. The fishing pier is a concrete platform on the breakwater's harbor side. Driving is an option: there's a parking lot on the breakwater near the pier.

## Los Angeles Maritime Museum

EAST END OF SIXTH STREET OFF PACIFIC AVENUE, SAN PEDRO

**T**HE MARITIME MUSEUM houses a history of boats from canoes to battle-ships. Most exhibits are models and drawings, but there are also a few small boats, fascinating both as artistic and technological achievements. A 16-foot model of the Titanic displays a cross-section through the vessel's steam rooms, galleys, quarters, and banquet halls. Our favorite exhibit was a display of 76 different knots. A rope hangs from the bottom of it so you can try to copy what you see.

The Museum does pose some access challenges. First, the slope up to the front door is moderately difficult. Second, the ramp to the second floor is continuous, with no landings, making it difficult to stop at exhibits along the way. Bathrooms have recently been improved, and each now has an accessible stall.

### LA MARITIME MUSEUM

#### HOURS

Tuesday–Sunday  
10 am to 4:30 pm

#### INFORMATION

310/548-7618

#### FEES

\$1 donation suggested

## Long Beach and Belmont Shore

**L**ONG BEACH is an outstanding holiday destination. Long Beach Harbor, at the west end of the city, is the permanent home of the *Queen Mary*, a luxury ocean liner. The Aquarium of the Pacific occupies the opposite shore, within walking distance of the pedestrian-friendly downtown. The east end of Long Beach has miles of sandy beaches.

### LONG BEACH

#### INFORMATION

Long Beach Area Convention  
and Visitor's Bureau  
562/436-3645



## Queen Mary

1126 QUEENS HIGHWAY

**W**HEN SHE WAS LAUNCHED in 1934, the *Queen Mary* was the largest luxury liner in the world. On her maiden voyage she carried 2,000 passengers and 1,200 crew across the Atlantic in less than four days, a record that held for 40 years. During World War II she was stripped of her lavish décor and used as a British transport ship. Restored after the war, she resumed passenger service, but the era of ocean liner travel soon ended. In 1967 she was moved to Long Beach Harbor, where she is now a hotel, restaurant, and tourist attraction. Much of her old Art Deco magnificence has been preserved.

As you might expect, wheelchair access on a vintage ocean liner is quirky at best; large portions of the ship are simply unreachable, but she's still well worth a visit.

The ship's main entrance has several flights of stairs and no elevator. Wheelchair access is from the hotel at the opposite end of the ship. Follow the signs to the hotel/handicapped/valet area and park in any numbered blue space. From the hotel lobby, take the elevator to the Promenade level. As you exit the elevator to the ship's deck, stop at the information counter for a guide map. It shows the locations of bathrooms and secondary elevators; although none are fully accessible, they may be usable by some.

Fortunately, the main exhibits are on the Promenade level, so there's much to see even if the secondary elevators don't work

### QUEEN MARY

#### HOURS

10 am to 6 pm

#### INFORMATION

562/435-3511

#### FEES

*Admission*

*Free for wheelchair riders*

General \$17

Seniors and Military \$15

Children \$13

*Additional fees for tours*

*Parking*

Free to \$8.00

#### FERRY

Catalina Express ferry to Santa Catalina Island docks near the bow of the *Queen Mary*.

*Adult fare \$39*

*Information*

800/316-8767



QUEEN MARY MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

*The legendary Queen Mary and Scorpion, a Russian Foxtrot-Class submarine*

for you. Check out the railings in the Observation Bar at the bow of the ship, and the woodwork and lighting throughout. Remnants of the *Queen Mary's* art collection (including the bronze grille doors that used to hang in the first-class dining room) are exhibited near the middle of the ship. Before you leave the Promenade level, stand near the prow and look down the deck toward the stern to get a sense of the ship's grand scale.

Elevators to other decks are hidden in dark or cramped corners. Use the guide map to find them. The elevator to Deck D is very small and slow. If your chair is large, you won't be able to turn around. When you get to Deck D, go through the unmarked door to the left. You'll find yourself standing in

an exhibition hall with a film about the *Queen Mary*, stories, pictures, maps of her routes, and a steep circular ramp that leads nowhere.

Deck E is spooky and interesting. The elevator deposits you underneath a stairway in a pitch-black room. Watch your head and remember where the door is for your return. We took two jogs to the right through the dark room and found ourselves in a chamber outside the ship looking down into the water at one of the enormous propellers. We continued toward the stern of the ship to the engine room. Parts of the room are too cramped to roll through, but you can see a lot from the entrance.

► **RESTROOMS** Restrooms in the Queen's Village at the main entrance have no accessible stalls. Things aren't much better on the ship. There's a front transfer stall in the center of the Promenade level (dot #9 on the guide map), but the toilet is very low and the doors have twist knobs.

## *Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific*

100 AQUARIUM WAY

**T**HE LONG BEACH AQUARIUM entertains the whole family with wondrously large tanks and exhibits representing three different regions of the Pacific. The Southern California Gallery focuses on tidepools, kelp forests, sea lions, rays, and turtles. The Northern Pacific Gallery depicts the subarctic waters of Russia and northern Japan; sea otters, diving birds, octopuses, and eels are star attractions. The Tropical Pacific Gallery contains coral lagoons, warm-water reefs, and vibrantly colored fish. The Aquarium has a 200-seat theater, a seal show, and a wheelchair-accessible playground with a replica of a whale's

### LONG BEACH AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC

#### HOURS

9 am to 6 pm

#### INFORMATION

562/590-3100

#### RESERVATIONS

800/444-PARK

#### FEES

##### *Admission*

General \$15.95

Seniors \$12.95

Children \$8.95

##### *Parking*

\$6 with Aquarium ticket stub

#### WHEELCHAIRS

Free wheelchairs available



LONG BEACH AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC

skeleton that children can crawl through.

The Aquarium is marvelously wheelchair-accessible: exhibits are spacious, elevators are huge, ramps are comfortable, and the gift shop aisles are wide. Restrooms have large accessible stalls. There is a unisex restroom on the first floor next to the elevators near the entrance. The frustration factor at this Aquarium is zero.

## *Long Beach Shoreline Park and Rainbow Harbor*

**J**UST OUTSIDE the Aquarium of the Pacific, Shoreline Park wraps around Rainbow Harbor and extends onto a small peninsula that sticks out into Queensway Bay. From a brick-paved promenade on the edge of Rainbow Harbor, we looked at boats and peered over the railing at clusters of mussels on the rocks.

Following the promenade south, you come to a store called Pierpoint Landing, where you can buy bait and fishing licenses or book a trip on a fishing boat. On the peninsula beyond the store, a boardwalk runs across a sand dune on the harbor side; a park with a fishing pier and a view of the *Queen Mary* is on the bay side. All the surfaces in the park are smooth and easy to travel.

► **RESTROOMS** There are good accessible restrooms south of the Aquarium at Pierpoint Landing. Stalls are wide with grab bars and automatic fixtures with sensors—no dexterity or strength is necessary.

## *Pine Avenue*

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**I**F YOU FOLLOW the brick promenade north around Rainbow Harbor, you'll come to a pedestrian bridge that crosses over Shoreline Drive to the Hyatt Hotel on Pine Avenue, the main street in downtown Long Beach. Remarkably, the bridge has an elevator. There has been much renovation downtown in recent years, so there are plenty of accessible shops, restaurants, and restrooms on Pine Avenue.

## *Shoreline Village*

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**SHORELINE VILLAGE DRIVE OFF OCEAN BOULEVARD**

**I**F YOU CONTINUE on the promenade past the bridge to Pine Avenue, you'll come to Shoreline Village, a shopping center with outdoor dining, a merry-go-round (no ramp), and a good ice cream shop. The promenade continues along the water's edge to the Long Beach Downtown Shoreline Marina.

► **RESTROOMS** Shoreline Village has one unisex accessible restroom behind the merry-go-round pavilion near the parking lot.

## *Long Beach Downtown Shoreline Marina*

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**450 EAST SHORELINE DRIVE**

**J**UST BEYOND Shoreline Village, the promenade that began at the Aquarium connects to a smooth concrete bike path that follows the inland side of the marina to Long Beach City Beach, then runs south along Belmont Shore to 54th Place. The path has a pedestrian-only lane and two bicycle lanes. It's a good place for a workout.

**LONG BEACH DOWNTOWN  
SHORELINE MARINA**

**INFORMATION**  
562/570-4950

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MALCOLM LUBLINER

### *Rainbow Harbor*

You can also walk or drive onto the jetty that shelters the marina. A concrete sidewalk runs the full length of the jetty (about 1/3 mile), so you can take in a view of the marina on one side and the bay on the other. There are three fishing piers on the bay side. The handrails are a little high for fishing from a wheelchair, but the lower portion of the rail is fairly open, so visibility is good.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Park in the Aquarium garage, the Shoreline Village lot, or in the blue spaces at the second fishing pier on the jetty. A public restroom near the second pier has a wide stall with grab bars, and sinks with paddle handles.

## *Long Beach City Beach to Alamitos Bay*

ALONG OCEAN BOULEVARD

**L**ONG BEACH CITY BEACH is a flat two-mile stretch of sand. The water is calm, protected by breakwaters on Queensway Bay. The bike path that began at the Downtown Shoreline Marina travels the length of City Beach and continues

**LONG BEACH  
CITY BEACH**

**BEACH WHEELCHAIRS**  
Available

along Belmont Shore to 54th Place. There is no clear boundary between City Beach and Belmont Shore; locals use the names interchangeably.

Most of the cross-streets along Ocean Boulevard end with stairs down to the beach. Wheelchair-accessible entrances are at the Alamitos parking lot off Shoreline Drive, at First Place, Junipero Avenue, 39th Place (Belmont Pier), and 54th Place. You can borrow a beach wheelchair from the snack and rental stand next to the Alamitos parking lot. A concrete path leads from this lot toward the water. If the Alamitos lot is full, try the one at the ocean end of Junipero Avenue.

The 1,620-foot-long, T-shaped, smooth concrete Belmont Pier, at the foot of 39th Place in Belmont Shore, closed for repairs and improvements in fall 2001. Metered parking is at Termino Avenue, off Ocean Boulevard.

You might also want to explore the Alamitos Bay area, which offers boating, beaches, a paved bike trail, quaint neighborhoods, shops, and restaurants. The Marine Stadium, a long, narrow, rectangular body of water connected to Alamitos Bay, was built in the 1920s as the rowing venue for

### *Entry to Aquarium*



the 1932 Olympics, and is now used for water sports events. The Alamitos Bay Marina has 1,880 slips, including public berths.

From the Pacific Coast Highway, take East Second Street toward Long Beach. Cross the bridge over the Marine Stadium to Naples Island, a quaint neighborhood built to resemble Venice, Italy. It is composed of three islands separated by canals. Parking is on-street. If you turn right onto Appian Way just past this bridge, to your right will be Marine Park and Mothers Beach, a narrow sandy shore with gentle water backed by grass and trees. Look for blue parking spaces.

If you continue on Appian Way across a second bridge, you can park next to the rock embankment and watch activities in the Stadium.

To get to Alamitos Bay Beach on the Bay, follow East Second Street to Bay Shore Avenue, go south three blocks to Ocean Boulevard and turn left into the parking lot. There is paved access to a concession stand where you can borrow a beach wheelchair. For information, call 562/570-1715.

► **RESTROOMS** Most of the restrooms at City Beach and Belmont Shore have narrow front-transfer stalls with grab bars. There is a full-width accessible stall in the restroom next to the lifeguard headquarters at Junipero Avenue, and an accessible chemical toilet on the Belmont Pier.

## *Bluff Park*

**OCEAN SIDE OF OCEAN BOULEVARD  
BETWEEN 20TH AND REDONDO**

**B**LUFF PARK overlooks Long Beach City Beach. Sidewalks are smooth, and the railing allows an open view from a wheelchair. There are no restrooms at the park. Parking is on-street.



# Orange County

## THE ORANGE COUNTY COAST

**T**HE 40-MILE Orange County coast is wonderfully complex, with wetlands, estuaries, seacliffs, headlands, coves, and wide stretches of golden sand. You'll find quiet nature preserves and busy beaches that attract people from across California—and the world—to surf, swim, ride bicycles, play volleyball, or just gaze out to sea.

We found easy wheelchair access to at least part of every beach community except Sunset Beach. But Huntington Beach was right next door, and we found plenty of access there.

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

*This map includes only enough locations and routes to give a general idea where the sites described in this book can be found.*

**ORANGE COUNTY**

*Pacific Coast Highway*

Seal Beach

Bolsa Chica

Huntington Beach

Newport Beach

Corona del Mar

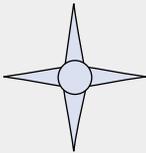
Laguna Beach

Aliso Beach

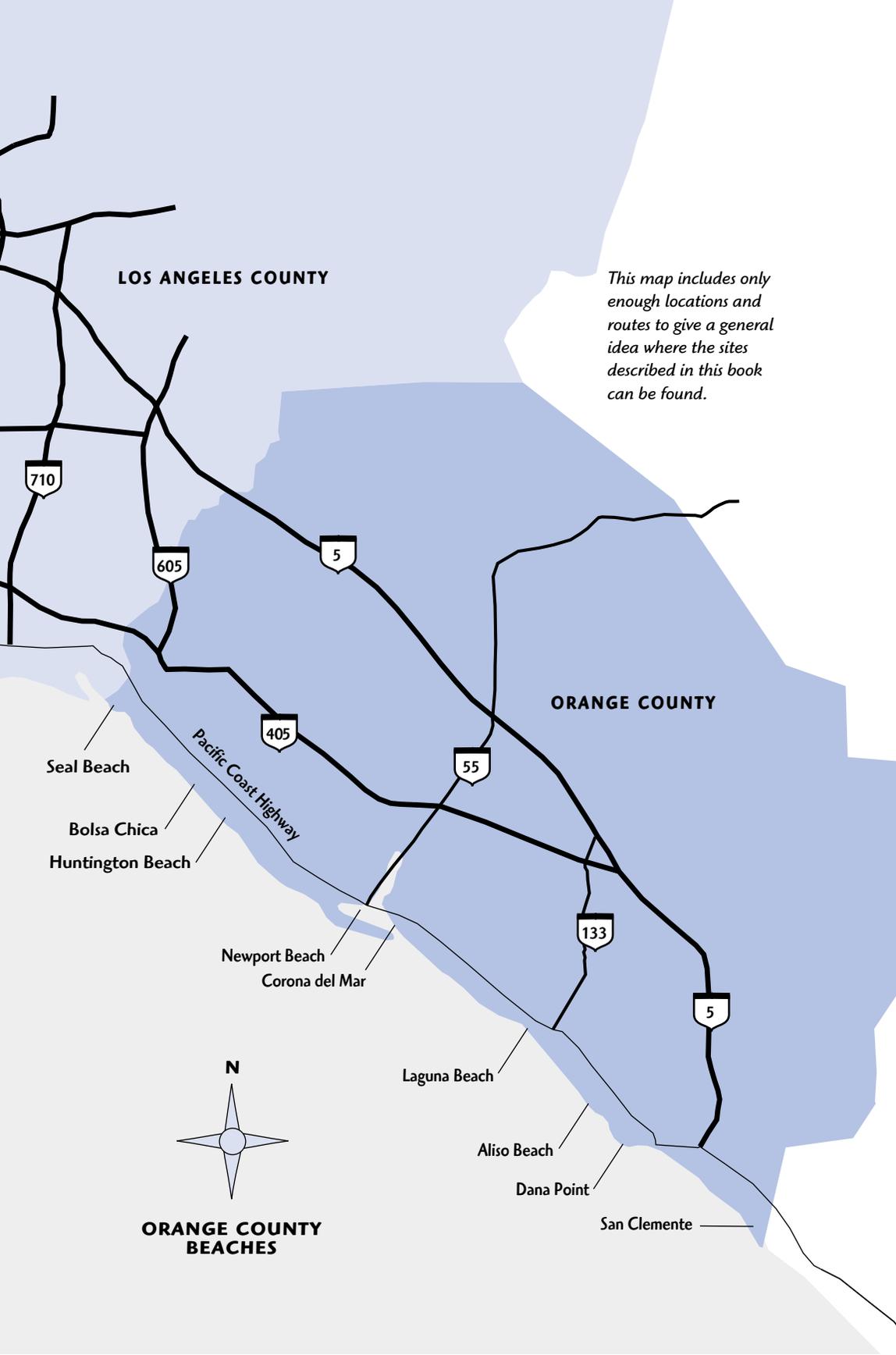
Dana Point

San Clemente

**N**



**ORANGE COUNTY  
BEACHES**





# Seal Beach

SEAL BEACH TO HUNTINGTON STATE BEACH

**F**ROM A WHEELCHAIR-RIDER'S point of view, this stretch of shoreline provides a good balance between nature and convenience. You will find long accessible beaches, pathways, piers, and opportunities to watch champion surfers and birds, to enjoy a fire on the beach at night, to visit coastal towns, and to camp.

The Pacific Coast Highway goes through the town of Seal Beach, but the turnoff (Seal Beach Boulevard) is easy to miss. But the town is well worth visiting, with its mile-long beach, long pier, and waterfront with restaurants and antique shops. Continuing south, the highway follows the shoreline again for 8.5 miles, past three contiguous public beaches: Bolsa Chica State Beach, Huntington City Beach, and Huntington State Beach. The Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve is on the inland side of the highway.



KEN GARDINER

*Egrets can often be seen at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.*

## *Seal Beach and Municipal Pier*

MAIN STREET AND OCEAN AVENUE

**T**HE WIDE, mile-long beach is south of the mouth of the San Gabriel River, in the City of Seal Beach. Seal Beach Pier is at the foot of Main Street. Steep driveways lead down to the beach on either side of the pier: the one on the south side is a little easier to negotiate. (There's another entrance north of the pier at Ocean Avenue and 1st Street, but that end of the beach lacks good accessibility features.) Parking is on-street.

A paved path runs from Seal Beach Pier south about half a mile to Electric Avenue. You can borrow a regular adult- or child-sized wheelchair to use on the pier from the Community Safety Building at the foot of Main Street. We asked if only disabled people may use it. The answer was no, so if you want to take an eye-to-eye stroll with a friend, this is one place to do it. A beach wheelchair is available at the lifeguard headquarters just west of the pier on the beach level.

The 1,865-foot-long wooden pier is a rough ride, but there's a diner with great ocean views at the end of it. Sport-fishing boats offer half-day or full-day trips.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Blue spaces are on Ocean Avenue at Main Street. Restrooms beneath the pier have wide stalls with grab bars and push-button sinks.

## *Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve*

EAST OF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY  
SOUTH OF WARNER AVENUE

**B**OLSA CHICA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE is the largest coastal saltmarsh preserve in the Los Angeles/Orange County metropolitan region. Its 300 acres are a vital oasis for resident shorebirds and millions of migrating

### SEAL BEACH

#### HOURS

4:30 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

562/431-2527

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

One available at lifeguard headquarters

birds traveling between the Arctic and South America along the Pacific Flyway. Colonies of elegant terns and endangered California least terns nest here. Take some time to observe and you will see a variety of wetland creatures.

Wheelchair access is easy to moderate. A 1.5-mile loop trail begins at the parking lot on the Pacific Coast Highway and crosses the marsh on a flat wooden bridge. Interpretive displays on and near the bridge describe wildlife and habitat you may see there. Both ends of this bridge have dropoffs and short moderate slopes. Most of the trail is hard packed dirt; part is asphalt.

Look for least terns on and around the nesting islands that were built for them, and for jellyfish, sea sponges, and crabs in the water. In the intertidal zone, look for the low-growing pickleweed,

#### BOLSA CHICA PRESERVE

##### HOURS

*Reserve*

Sunrise to sunset

*Interpretive Center on  
Warner Avenue*

Tuesday–Friday, 10 am–4 pm,

Saturday, 9 am–noon,

Sunday, 12:30–3 pm

##### INFORMATION

714/846-1114

##### PARKING

Lots at 3842 Warner Avenue  
and off Pacific Coast Highway  
across from the entrance to  
Bolsa Chica State Beach



MALCOLM LUBLINER

which survives in salty water by concentrating the salt into the ends of its fleshy stems; and for the taller cordgrass, which produces as much oxygen, acre per acre, as a tropical rain forest. You don't have to travel far; in fact, the longer you can stay still in one spot, the more you'll see.

The Interpretive Center is accessible by ramp. It has a saltwater aquarium, various exhibits, books, aerial and trail maps, and offers docent led tours.

► **RESTROOMS** There are accessible portable restrooms at each of the parking lots.

## *Bolsa Chica State Beach*

ALONG THE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY  
FROM WARNER AVENUE TO SEA POINT

**S**IX MILES of wide sandy beach are backed by an asphalt bike path that connects with the Santa Ana River Trail to the south-east. This bike path is far from the surf zone, but it crosses other paths that run a few hundred yards toward the shore. Some of those paths are partially covered in sand, but they are easy to roll over.

If you come at low tide, you're likely to see many shorebirds feeding in the intertidal zone, especially in spring and autumn. If you have a good pair of binoculars you can identify various birds and observe details of their behavior. You can learn more about birds at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve across the highway.

There are many fire pits in the sand along this beach. We found one on pavement in front of the first set of blue spaces as you enter the parking lot. An RV campground, with water, electri-

### **BOLSA CHICA BEACH**

#### **HOURS**

6 am–10 pm  
(Entry gates close 9 pm)

#### **INFORMATION**

714/846-3460

#### **CAMPGROUND RESERVATIONS**

800/444-7265

#### **FEES**

##### *Parking*

\$6 per vehicle  
\$1 with State Parks  
disabled placard

##### *RV camping*

General \$18, Seniors \$16  
(RV campground closed for  
renovation till early 2002)



PETER KNAPP

*Endangered light-footed clapper rails are rarely seen, but can be found at Bolsa Chica.*

cal hookups, and a dump station, is at the south end of the beach. Four campsites are designated accessible.

► **RESTROOMS** Accessible restrooms are in the RV and picnic areas at the south end of the parking lot. The RV area has spacious single-user restrooms with grab bars, high toilets, and push-button sinks, as well as accessible showers (warm water) with seats.

## *Huntington City Beach and Pier*

ALONG PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY  
BETWEEN MAIN STREET AND BEACH BOULEVARD

**T**HE U.S. SURFBOARD CHAMPIONSHIPS draw thousands to Huntington City Beach every August. The 1,850-foot-long pier at Main Street offers great views of surfers in action. The pier was rebuilt in 1992 and has a smooth concrete surface. At the pier's ocean end is a popular diner. Restaurants at the foot of the pier offer fancier fare. Check out the plentiful outdoor dining facilities along Main Street, which runs directly inland from the pier.

Facilities at Huntington City Beach are older and less accessible than those at Huntington State Beach or the pier area.

### HUNTINGTON CITY

#### **HOURS**

5 am–midnight

#### **INFORMATION**

714/536-5281

#### **FEES**

*Day use \$7*

*Free with disabled placard*

*Camping*

*November–April*

*\$15 per night*

*\$7.50 with disabled placard*

Paved paths run toward the water from the main path north of the pier, but dead-end far from the shore. The restrooms are too small for most wheelchairs. Major beach renovations were begun in summer 2001, including new accessible restrooms in the RV camping area. Call ahead to find out whether they have been completed. There are no RV hookups for water or electricity.

► **PARKING** At Sixth Street, north of the pier, enter the three-level parking structure. Blue spaces are free. There is a walkway to the pier plaza, and a ramp to the pier. There is also a ramp to the bike path below the pier. You can also take the elevator to the right of Duke's Restaurant. (The sign above the elevator reads Chimayo.) This is a great alternative, especially for getting back up to your car. The parking lot closest to Huntington Street has blue spaces at beach level.

► **RESTROOMS** Recently constructed accessible restrooms with wide stalls and grab bars are at Beach Blvd., at the pier plaza, and on the pier.



MALCOLM LUBLINER

## Huntington State Beach

PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AT  
BEACH BOULEVARD

**T**HIS TWO-MILE BEACH is backed by a multi-use path and parking lots. The beach is so wide that you can't see much surf from this path. Still, it's a nice place for a walk, and you can always borrow the beach wheelchair at Magnolia kiosk to get out to the water. You may want to call ahead to reserve it. Four new asphalt paths to the high-tide berm should improve access to the beach and some fire rings.

► **RESTROOMS** Each restroom building has at least one large, accessible, single-user restroom with a high toilet and grab bars.

### HUNTINGTON STATE

#### HOURS

6 am–10 pm  
(entrance gate closes 9 pm)

#### INFORMATION

714/536-1454

#### FEES

*Parking*

\$3 per vehicle

\$1 with State Parks disabled  
placard

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available



MALCOLM LUBLINER

## *Talbert Marsh*

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**O**N THE INLAND SIDE of Pacific Coast Highway, across from Huntington State Beach near the mouth of the Santa Ana River, is a special place you're not likely to find on most tourist maps: Talbert Marsh, a 25-acre wetland restored for wildlife and flood control. Turn inland at Brookhurst Street, drive past Bushard Street (first light), park along the street, enter the marsh from the sidewalk and follow the asphalt bicycle path. You'll see interpretive signs along the path.

This marsh used to be an informal parking lot. Now it's popular with birds—about 80 species have been counted here. At low tide you are likely to see shorebirds, at high tide pelicans, cormorants, least terns, and others. In mid-2001 plans were under way to add another 17 acres to this preserve.



# Newport Beach

NEWPORT BEACH TO  
CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK

**T**HE TOWNS OF Newport Beach and Corona del Mar were built around natural waterways, now greatly altered. In Newport Beach, a peninsula shelters a harbor and an inland estuary. Most of the area's big beaches are on the peninsula. Balboa Island lies in Newport Harbor between the peninsula and the mainland. The tides flow into the estuary, an ancient riverbed carved into a mesa. This is a landscape worth exploring.



ERICK MIKITTEN

*View from Inspiration Point, Corona del Mar State Beach*

## *Balboa Peninsula*

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**B**ALBOA BOULEVARD crosses the Pacific Coast Highway and runs east along the six-mile peninsula. Just a few blocks south of the boulevard, there's a huge stretch of beach with an oceanfront promenade and two piers, Newport and Balboa.

If you are heading for the beach from Balboa Boulevard, use Sixth Street or Island Avenue. Many other streets have stairs. There are free blue spaces in the lot at B Street. The A Street parking lot provides blue spaces for a fee.

We toured the peninsula from the promenade. This smooth concrete pathway runs the full length of the beach, with shops and restaurants alongside it, similar to the Strand in Venice Beach.

Peninsula Park (at the east end of Balboa Beach, near B Street) is a good place to access the promenade because there are free blue spaces in the adjacent parking lot. This park is also a good place to picnic or play Frisbee because the lawn is mowed short enough to roll over.

The ocean is not always visible from the promenade. You can get an ocean view from the piers or from the sidewalks that extend from the promenade toward the water. There's a long sidewalk east of the Peninsula Park parking lot, and another at Eleventh Street close to Balboa Pier, at the foot of Main Street.

Southern California has a lot of piers, but Balboa Pier was one of our favorites for several reasons. First, it provides a good view, thanks to its narrow metal handrails (many other piers have thick wooden handrails right at a wheelchair rider's eye level). Second, the concrete surface makes for a comfortable ride. Third, the landscape visible from the pier is lovely, with the beach curving off into the distance. There are often free concerts in the bandstand at the foot of the pier.

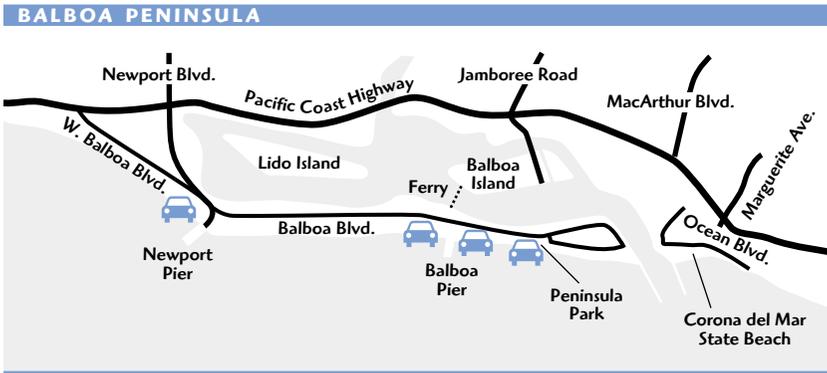
To get onto Newport Pier, at 20th Street, you have to negotiate a steep slope at the foot of the pier. Handrails on the east edge of the slope are useful for pulling yourself up.

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### BALBOA PENINSULA

**BEACH WHEELCHAIR**  
Available

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The peninsula still has a remnant working waterfront. The Dory Fishing Fleet, in operation here since 1891, heads out before dawn from its docks next to the Newport Pier, returning around 9 A.M. to sell the catch on the beach. Fishermen assured us that you don't have to roll across the sand in order to buy; just come on through their wooden dock and wave to them.

► **RESTROOMS** There is a unisex restroom with a large stall and grab bars near the men's room at Balboa Pier. The restrooms at 15th Street are spacious and usable if you can tolerate the lack of doors. Accessible stalls have grab bars and metal toilets. Bathrooms at Newport Pier at 20th Street are similar, but may be crowded.

## *Balboa Island*

**B**ALBOA ISLAND is a small residential community, with a tourist-oriented commercial district, between the peninsula and the mainland. You can reach it from the mainland via the bridge at Jamboree Street, but we chose to ferry over from the peninsula. The Balboa Ferry departs every few minutes from the end of Palm Street north of Balboa Boulevard. You can drive your car onto the Ferry if you're willing to wait in line (sometimes for an hour or more); pedestrians are usually able to board within a few minutes. The four-minute ride costs 50 cents. Depending on the tide, there may be a step at the end of the boarding ramp, but the boat crew is ready to assist.

From the ferry landing you can travel straight ahead to Balboa Island's downtown, where you will find galleries, stores, and restaurants; or you can turn left and explore the docks. The walkway is accessible most of the way around the island. Our half-hour trip from the ferry to the far side of the island was a quiet sunset stroll past docks and tiny beaches on the water side and homes and gardens on the other. A low wall separates the walkway from bits of sandy shore.

► **RESTROOMS** The public restrooms near the ferry landing on the island side are completely inaccessible. There are new accessible restrooms at the fire station at Marine Avenue and Park Avenue. Enter the restrooms from the street on the left side of the building.

## *Upper Newport Bay State Ecological Reserve/Interpretive Center*

STATE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE, BACK BAY DRIVE AT JAMBOREE ROAD  
INTERPRETIVE CENTER, 2301 UNIVERSITY DRIVE

**T**HE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE is a beautiful inland estuary carved into a coastal mesa. Marsh plants, water, and birds are main attractions at this oasis within the city.

Wheelchair access is good on Back Bay Drive, a one-way asphalt road which hugs the edge of the estuary. Though used by pedestrians, bicycles, and motorists, there are few cars and the speed limit is 15 mph, so we were comfortable sharing the road. The views are great the whole way. The estuary is especially vibrant in the evening when the low sunlight strikes the water, fish jump, and birds gather to feed and roost.

### UPPER NEWPORT BAY

#### *State Ecological Reserve*

##### **HOURS**

Unrestricted

##### **INFORMATION**

Upper Newport  
Bay Naturalists  
949/640-6746

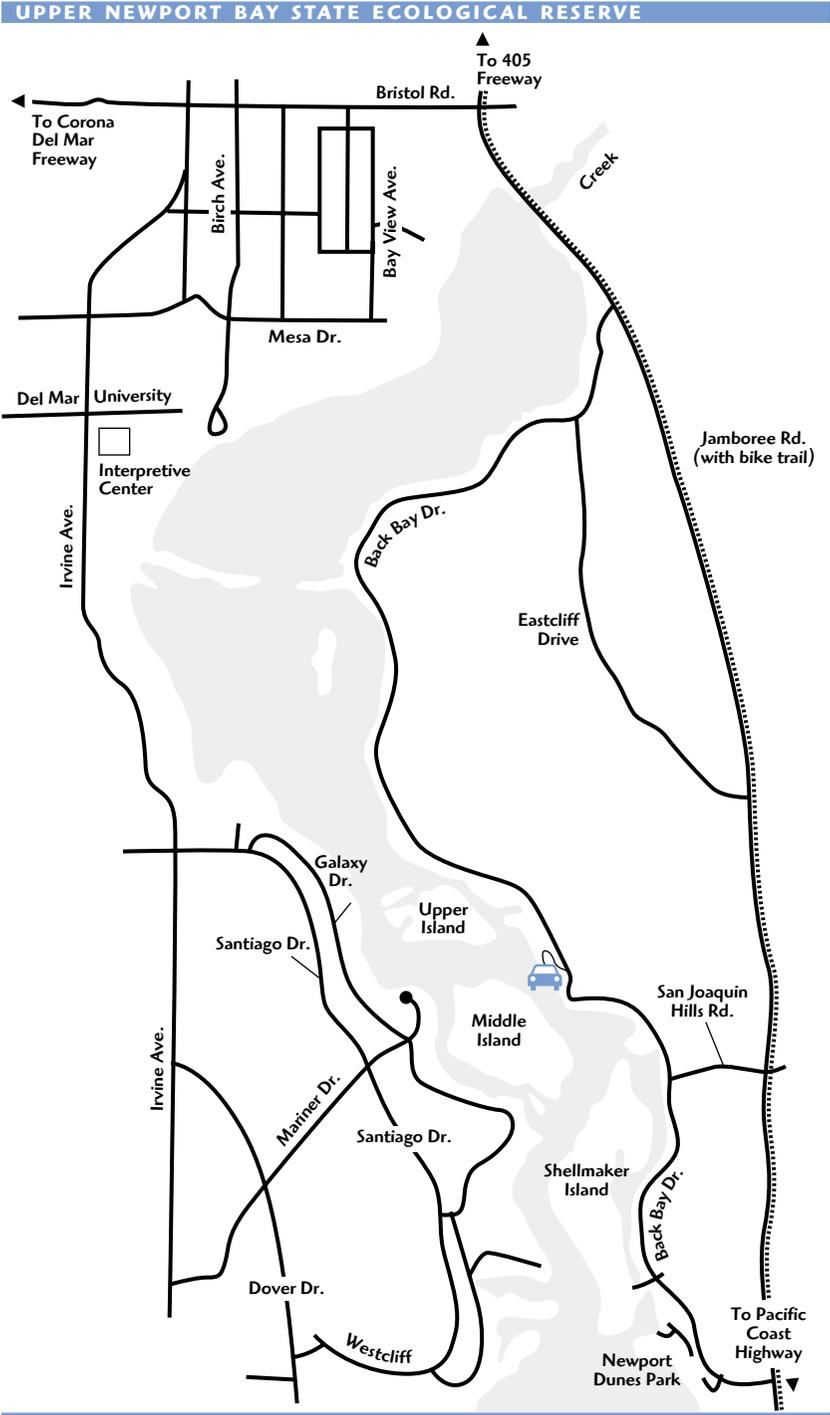
#### *Interpretive Center*

##### **HOURS**

Saturday–Sunday  
9 am–4:30 pm

##### **INFORMATION**

714/973-6820



The Upper Newport Bay Naturalists host many wheelchair-accessible programs, including walks with local naturalists and campfire events for families. Check what's happening at the Interpretive Center, at the head of the bay.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Park in the dirt lot on Back Bay Drive just past San Joaquin Hills Road. The lot and the trail are flat in that area. You can also park at the Interpretive Center. Accessible restrooms are at Newport Dunes Resort, at the south end of Back Bay Drive, and at the Interpretive Center.

## *Corona del Mar State Beach*

OCEAN BOULEVARD WEST OF MARGUERITE AVENUE

**C**ORONA DEL MAR STATE BEACH is on the east shore of the Newport Harbor channel, opposite the tip of Balboa Peninsula. This beach is best reached by car because the road down is very steep. With pavement at the water's edge and no guardrail to block your view, this is a great place to watch the water and boats. Head west from the parking lot toward the rock outcropping beyond the lawns to get to the pavement by the channel.

*Inspiration Point, with ramp to Corona del Mar State Beach*



ERICK MIKITTEN

The channel is a great fishing spot if your brakes are good enough to keep you out of the water. (Remember, there's no guardrail or curb to keep you from rolling into the drink!) Halibut is the prize catch, according to local fishermen. But you don't need a fishing pole to have fun on the channel. At high tide, waves suck the water down then splash it up over your feet in an exhilarating display.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Blue spaces are at the west end of the parking lot. Both restroom buildings are moderately accessible. Men's rooms have spacious stalls with grab bars, and twist faucet sinks. Women's rooms at the west end of the beach have a similar stall, but no handle to open the stall door; you have to lean forward and pull the door's bottom edge. The women's room east of the entrance has an easier door, but the entrance is narrow and requires a hairpin turn.

## *Crystal Cove State Park*

PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY BETWEEN LAGUNA BEACH AND CORONA DEL MAR, ABOUT FOUR MILES FROM EACH

**C**RYSTAL COVE STATE PARK, totaling about 2,800 acres, extends on both sides of Pacific Coast Highway. On the ocean side there are three miles of quiet trails on the bluffs above the beach. The Pelican Point area has the greatest number of accessible trails and an outstanding native plant restoration project. On the inland side, single-track fire roads used by mountain bicyclists run through 2,400 acres of rough terrain in El Moro Canyon.

### CORONA DEL MAR

#### **HOURS**

6 am–10 pm  
(Entry gate closes 9 pm)

#### **INFORMATION**

949/644-3044

#### **FEES**

*Parking*

\$6 per vehicle

\$1 with disabled placard

### CRYSTAL COVE

#### **HOURS**

6 am–sunset

#### **INFORMATION**

949/494-3539

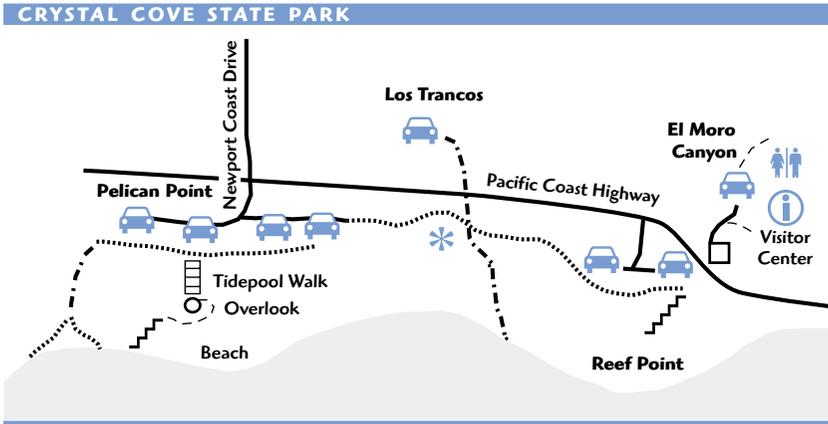
#### **FEES**

*Parking*

\$3 per vehicle

\$2 seniors

\$1 with State Parks  
disabled placard



You might skip Los Trancos and Reef Point, where the trails down to the beach are steep. Restoration of the historic cottages at Los Trancos will include accessible parking and some access to the cottages and the beach.

## Pelican Point

### PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AT NEWPORT COAST DRIVE

Lilac, California sage, elderberry, and sunflower—Pelican Point is a plant lover’s dream. The trails immerse you in the coastal sage scrub, home to the endangered California gnatcatcher and many other birds. With a vast network of paved trails, Pelican Point is one of the best places on the Orange County coast for long walks. Group outings with multiple sets of wheels would be very comfortable here because the east-west paths are wide enough for side-by-side travel.

Our favorite paved trail takes off from the west end of the parking area and heads westward, cutting through a landscape rich with plants and birds. Slopes are manageable at a slow pace; at a jog they’re a workout. The smooth pavement is about 10 feet wide. The trail turns south and heads downhill to the beach about .75 mile from the parking lot. We went partway down the hill before it became uncomfortably steep.

We also enjoyed the Tidepool Walk, a southbound ground-level wooden boardwalk through a botanical restoration area. The five-foot-wide boardwalk



*Dunes at Pelican Point*

begins near the restroom building in parking lot number 2 (see map) and runs toward the ocean through drifts of windswept sage. Native plants are labeled with both their common and scientific names. Birds you may see include California towhees, mourning doves, turkey vultures, and white-tailed kites.

The Tidepool Walk ends at the edge of the bluffs overlooking the tidepool area below. Since

there's only a steel cable handrail on the perimeter, the sweeping ocean view is unobstructed. A smaller sand path continues down the bluff. It's narrow and difficult—definitely not officially wheelchair-accessible—but an adventurer with a manual wheelchair may want to try it. There are some severe cross-slopes at washed-out areas, and the steel cable handrail is not much help. This is the equivalent of mountain biking on a wheelchair. Turn around when you get to the driftwood interpretive sign and the bench overlook, just before the metal cord handrail changes to wood. There are stairs on the next turn and very little room to turn around. The return trip up the hill is tough, and it's helpful to have someone behind you to push and balance.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Parking lots, restrooms, outdoor showers, and drinking fountains all have good access. Restroom buildings have large accessible stalls with high toilets, grab bars, and sinks with stiff push buttons.

## **El Moro Canyon**

El Moro Canyon, a 2,400-acre watershed on the inland side of the highway, has 18 miles of trails, but they're rough going by wheelchair. The trail on the right side of the road just before the parking lot is probably the easiest, but it's dusty and steep in places.

The Visitor Center is open sporadically on weekends only. (It's open only when a volunteer is available.) The center has tabletop exhibits of native flora and fauna.

▶ **RESTROOMS** The spacious accessible restroom at the Visitor Center is open during park hours even when the center is closed. It has grab bars and a sink with stiff push buttons.



# *Laguna Beach*

CRESCENT BAY POINT PARK TO  
ALISO BEACH COUNTY PARK

**L**AGUNA BEACH is an intimate seaside town built around an ocean cove and surrounded by hills. The town's northern waterfront is a spectacular stretch of cliffs with wheelchair-accessible parks and vistas. In central Laguna Beach, a charming and walkable downtown, famous for its art galleries, lies just across the street from the beach. South Laguna has another stretch of cliffs, with wheelchair access to one beach.



ERICK MIKITTEN

*View from Heisler Park toward Laguna Beach*

## Crescent Bay Point Park

WEST END OF CRESCENT BAY DRIVE

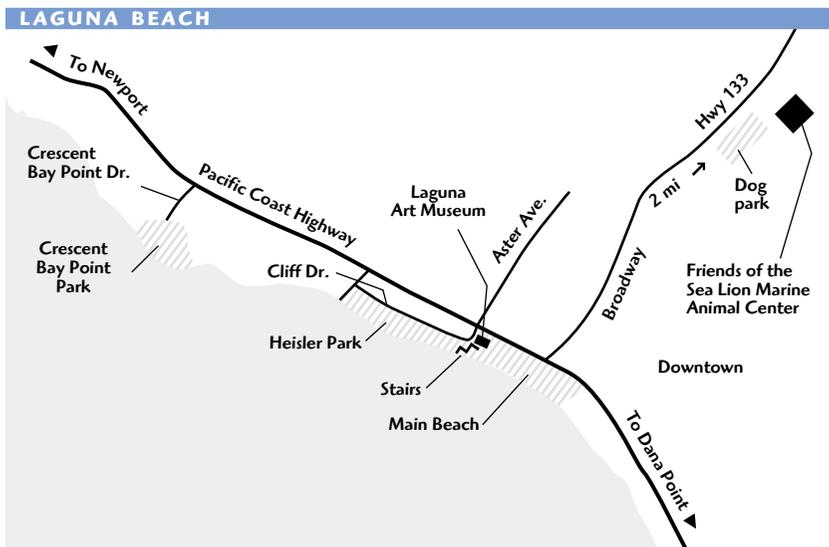
**C**RESCENT BAY POINT PARK is on a bluff overlooking the ocean. It's small, well-manicured, and offers panoramic views of the ocean and the rugged shore. Waves crash onto enormous rock outcroppings below, heaving up ocean spray. As the waves recede, thick cascades of turquoise water plummet down the sides of the black rocks. There is beauty here even on a gray day.

Several paths are paved, so you can visit after (or even during) heavy rains. Stormy waters are especially beautiful on the rocks below. Bring your thermos of coffee and watch the sea lions draped over the rocks. From December through March, you might see migrating whales just beyond the surf zone.

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** Park on the street in the adjacent residential neighborhood. There are no restrooms.



Elisa Mikiten at Crescent Bay Point Park





ERICK MIKITTEN

*Heisler Park*

## *Heisler Park*

WEST OF CLIFF DRIVE

**I**F CRESCENT BAY POINT is for sitting, Heisler Park is for strolling. The park extends three-quarters of a mile alongside Cliff Drive, and has lawns, palm trees, and picnic tables. A paved path at the cliff edge provides ocean views, but has some short steep segments. Closer to Cliff Drive the paths are flatter. At the south end of Heisler Park, the path turns into stairs down to Laguna's Main Beach. There's an alternate route on the city sidewalks: head down Aster Avenue to the Laguna Art Museum and turn right at Pacific Coast Highway.

► **PARKING** Park on adjacent residential streets.

## Main Beach

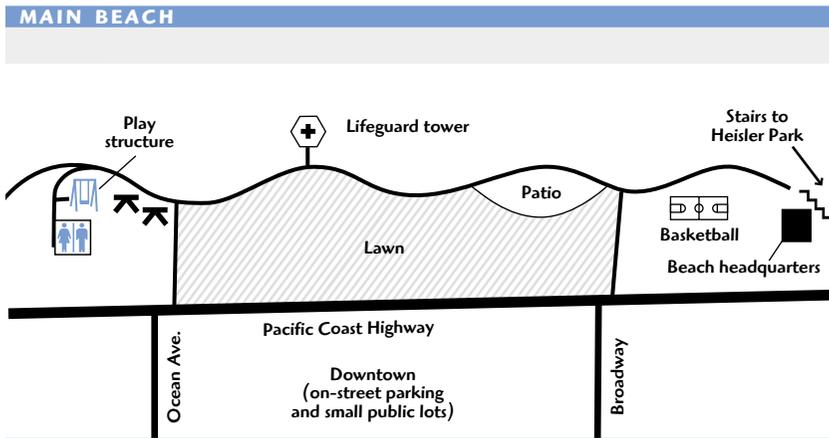
WEST END OF BROADWAY AT PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

**M**AIN BEACH is a crescent-shaped cove beach with a boardwalk parallel to the shore a few hundred yards from the surf. Lawns, picnic areas, benches, and basketball courts—all accessible from the boardwalk—allow you to enjoy the beach without hassling with the sand. The children’s playground at the southern end of the beach has a wheelchair-accessible surface at the play structure. Across the street, downtown Laguna Beach provides an easy retreat into the shade.

► **RESTROOMS** Restrooms at the south end of the beach have large stalls and grab bars.

## Downtown

**A**CROSS THE STREET from Main Beach, downtown Laguna Beach has restaurants, art galleries, and boutiques. It’s easy to wander about contentedly for an entire afternoon. Downtown is generally flat, and the curb cuts are good. Most restaurants and shops have accessible front entrances. This town is known as an artists’ colony, and several art festivals are held here in midsummer. For festival information call 714/494-3050.





ERICK MIRITEN

*Laguna Beach Boardwalk*

## *Friends of the Sea Lion Marine Mammal Center*

ON ROUTE 133, APPROXIMATELY TWO MILES INLAND  
FROM PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, SOUTH SIDE OF THE STREET

**W**HEN A SICK or injured sea lion is stranded on Laguna's shore, the Friends of the Sea Lion Marine Mammal Center sends teams of volunteers to the rescue. They capture the animals in large cages and take them to the Center to recuperate. When sea lions are present, visitors can view them from a concrete walkway about six feet from their enclosures. Each sea lion has a small pool, and some nap with just their noses poking up above the water. If the Center has no animals when you visit, you may be personally disappointed, but it's a good sign that the sea lions are healthy. Call ahead if you want to be sure.

### FRIENDS OF THE SEA LION

#### HOURS

10 am–4 pm daily

#### INFORMATION

949/494-3050

#### FEES

Donation suggested

## Aliso Beach County Park

31000 BLOCK OF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY,  
SOUTH LAGUNA

**A**LISO BEACH is a good place to watch surfers. The easiest access is at the south end of the parking lot near the lifeguard headquarters, where the sidewalk is level with the pavement of the parking lot.

► **RESTROOMS** Restrooms at Aliso Beach County Park are tiny and inaccessible.

### ALISO BEACH

#### HOURS

6 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

949/661-7013

#### FEES

##### *Parking*

Free with disabled placard  
or plates

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIR

Available at lifeguard  
headquarters



Aliso Beach County Park



# *Dana Point*

DANA POINT TO CAPISTRANO BEACH PARK

**W**HILE THE BLUFFS at Crystal Cove State Park remained almost undisturbed, those at Dana Point were built up with residential neighborhoods and a Ritz Carlton Hotel. Where there's development there is pavement, and that can be great for a wheelchair rider. Below the cliffs, Dana Point has constructed a 2,500-slip yacht harbor, a shopping center, and beachfront parks with campgrounds.



*Seagull at Dana Point Harbor*

ERICK MIKITTEN

## Salt Creek Beach Park

WEST OF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY OFF RITZ CARLTON DRIVE

**A**LTHOUGH ACCESS is not perfect, there are good reasons to visit this beach: to watch the whales or surfers, to sit high above the ocean, or to relax on a beach-level lawn. The road from the parking lot down to the beach is too long and steep for wheelchair riding. Fortunately, the park allows cars with disabled parking placards or plates to drive down to a drop-off zone near beach level. There is no parking at beach level, so someone is supposed to take the car up to the parking lot and hike back down.

### SALT CREEK

#### HOURS

5 am–midnight

#### INFORMATION

949/661-7013

#### FEES

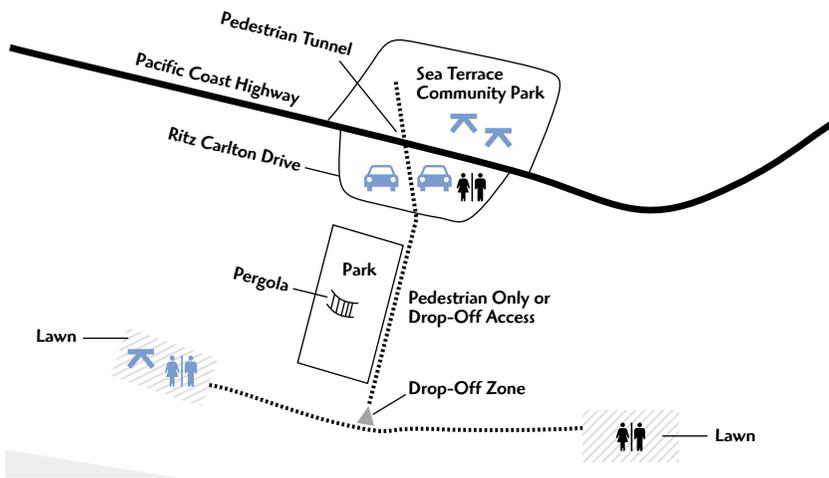
*Parking*

Free with disabled placard or plates

As you drive down to the beach, check out the park beside the road. Its terraces are blanketed in plush green lawn overlooking the ocean. With binoculars the park makes a great whale-watching spot.

From the drop-off zone, you'll find asphalt access roads that are easy to roll over despite a thin covering of sand. The north road ends at a restroom

### SALT CREEK BEACH PARK





ERICK MIKITTEN

*Southern end of Salt Creek Beach Park*

building behind which is a pleasant, hedge-lined lawn with a picnic table and a barbecue. The lawn is just above beach level, so it's a wonderful place to view the beach without contending with sand. The rabbits that fed on the grass at twilight delighted us. The south road also ends at a restroom building (inaccessible) with a smaller lawn behind it.

Sea Terrace Community Park, on the inland side of Pacific Coast Highway, is accessible through a pedestrian tunnel from the Salt Creek Beach parking lot. It's a hilly park with beautiful lawns and nice concrete paths. You have to cross about six feet of gently sloping lawn to reach the nearest picnic table. This would be a nice place to fly a kite or play with children.

► **RESTROOMS** The only wheelchair-accessible restroom at Salt Creek is at beach level near the north lawn. The restroom has wide stalls and grab bars. The restrooms at the main parking lot have two-foot-wide doors and no wide stalls.

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## *Ken Sampson Lookout*

### **SOUTH END OF STREET OF THE BLUE LANTERN**

**D**ANA POINT has several small parks on the cliff tops overlooking the harbor. Ken Sampson Lookout is one of the best because it has benches and no stairs. With thousands of boats in the glistening water, the harbor is a pretty sight.

► **PARKING / RESTROOMS** There is on-street parking, but there are no restroom facilities.

## Heritage Park

SOUTH END OF STREET OF THE GOLDEN LANTERN

**Y**OU MIGHT ENJOY a wild downhill ride at Heritage Park. The park is on a steep hillside that is terraced from Dana Point's blufftops down to the harbor. There are some level spots at the top with benches and grassy areas. Below that a steep concrete path zigzags down the terraces. The path is steeper than it looks, perhaps 1:6 or 1:7 on the hairpin turns. It's a fun ride down, but manual wheelchair riders should bring gloves, as your wheel rims will heat up from all the braking. Getting back up the hill is not easy. Either have someone meet you with a car at the bottom of the hill on Dana Point Harbor Drive, or just park at the bottom of the park, push up the hill as far as you can, then coast back down to the car.

### HERITAGE

#### HOURS

7 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

562/946-6476

► **PARKING/RESTROOMS** The on-street parking area has one blue space and a curb cut. There are no restroom facilities.

## Dana Point Harbor

ALONG DANA POINT HARBOR DRIVE

**D**ANA POINT HARBOR'S mile-long shoreline extends from the massive headlands of Dana Point south to Doheny State Beach. North of Island Drive, a park with a smooth concrete path hugs the shoreline. It's a pleasant place for an afternoon stroll. At the north end of the park, there are two tourist attractions: the Ocean Institute and the *Pilgrim*, a square-rigged brig.

### DANA POINT

#### INFORMATION

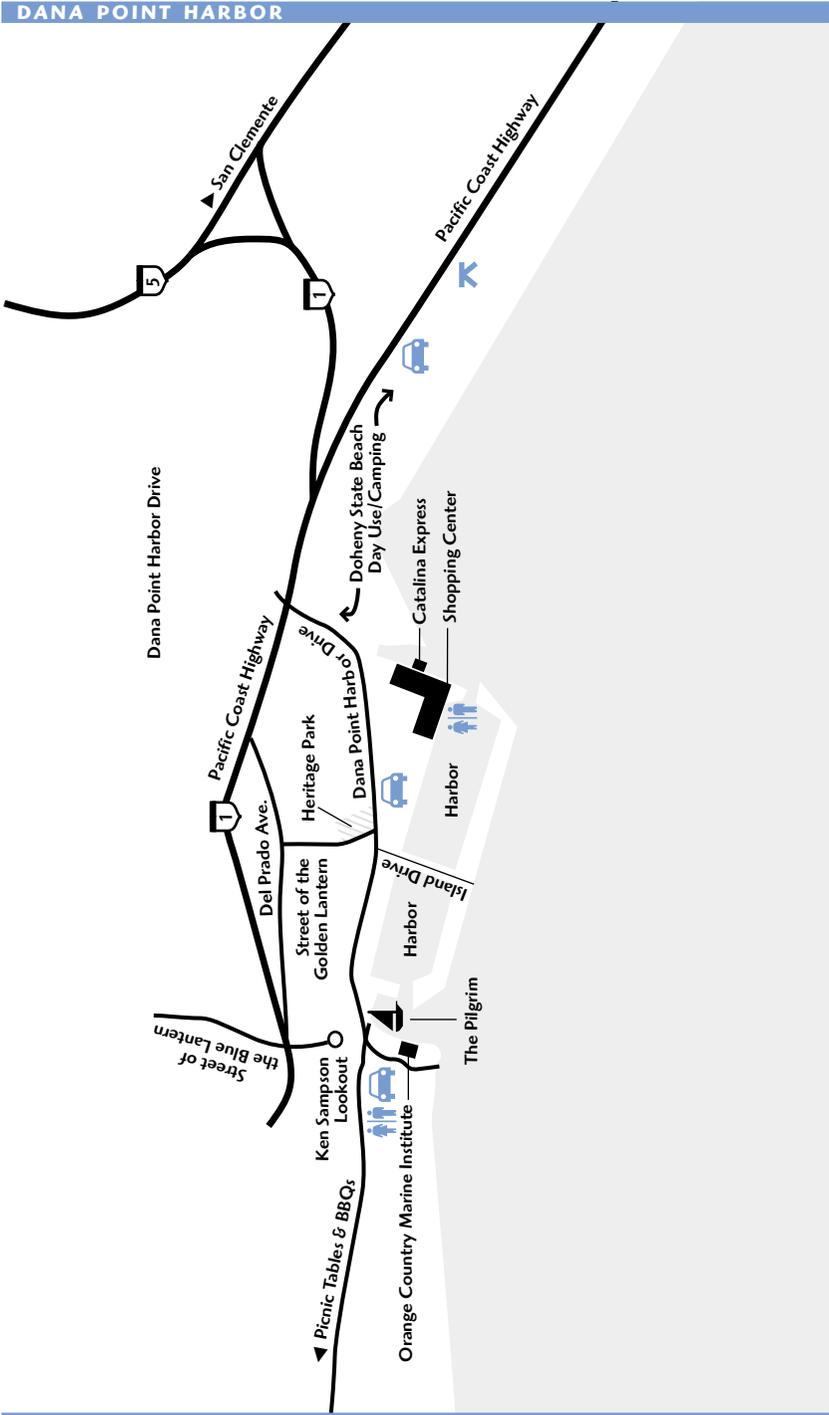
Ocean Institute and *Pilgrim*

949/496-2274

Dana Point Sportfishing

949/496-5794

As this book went to press, the Ocean Institute was beginning a major upgrade and expansion of its buildings and facilities, due to be completed in



2002. A rich variety of exhibits and displays will be fully accessible, along with an area restored with native plants and a rustic picnic area.

The *Pilgrim* is a full-size replica of the square-rigged brig Richard Henry Dana, Jr., wrote about in *Two Years Before the Mast*. The original ship was built in 1825, and the replica in 1945. The public is welcome aboard on Sundays from 10 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. when the ship is in port (call to check). About half of the ship's deck is accessible via a ramp. Next to the *Pilgrim*, there is a small wheelchair-accessible fishing pier.

South of Island Drive there is a shopping center with restaurants, a small public fishing pier, and commercial boat docks. Dana Point Sportfishing offers fishing and whale-watching trips. There is a step at the end of the loading ramp, but the crew is available to assist. If you're going on a fishing trip, we suggest that you arrive early so that you can board first and stake out a fishing station that works well for you.

Catalina Express launches its ferries to Catalina Island from the docks behind the shopping center. The reservation agent can schedule you on a ferry that has an accessible bathroom. All the boats are boarded from a ramp that may have a step at the bottom at low tide. The crew is ready to help.

► **RESTROOMS** The Ocean Institute restrooms have narrow stalls with grab bars suitable for a front transfer. Sinks have twist faucets. The situation should be improved when renovations are completed. The public restrooms at the shopping center have wide accessible stalls with grab bars and raised toilets, but the tight turns at the entrance may be impassable for large wheelchairs.

## *Doheny State Beach*

DEL OBISPO AND PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

**S**AN JUAN CREEK divides Doheny State Beach into a day-use area and a campground. Both are attractive for wheelchair

### DOHENY STATE

#### HOURS

6 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

949/496-6172

#### FEES

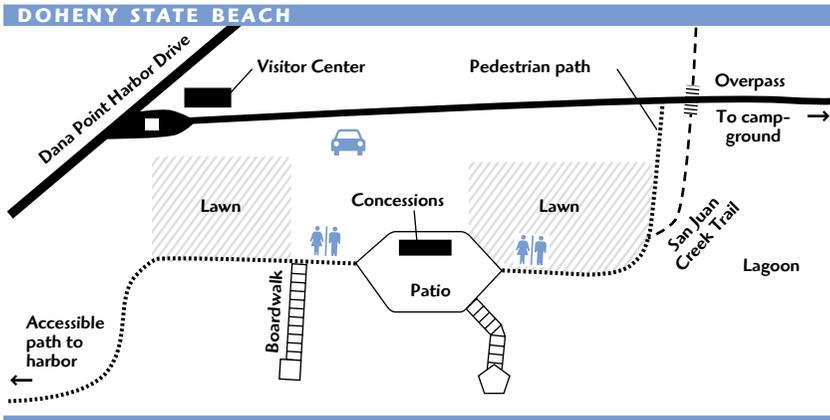
Day use

\$3 per vehicle

\$1 with disabled placard

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available



riding. The day-use area has a lot of landscaped areas next to the beach, with barbecues, picnic tables, and fire pits. The campground has reasonably accessible facilities and a bike path that runs down to San Juan Capistrano. There's also a small visitor center at the parking lot entrance with interpretive displays, aquariums, and a tidepool.

Beach wheelchairs are available. Call ahead or inquire at the ranger's booth at the entrance to the parking lot. The water at Dana Point is relatively quiet for swimming, as Dana Point Harbor blocks the rougher surf.

Two campsites near the restrooms are reserved for wheelchair riders. There are accessible picnic tables and fire pits next to the sites, but the surf zone is below beach level so there's no view of the water.

► **RESTROOMS** The restrooms in the day-use area have front-transfer stalls with grab bars. The stalls in the campground restrooms are wider, but most are still shy of a five-foot turning radius.



ERICK MIRTEN

## Capistrano Beach Park

PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AT PALISADES DRIVE,  
CAPISTRANO BEACH

**T**HIS SANDY BEACH between Doheny State Beach and San Clemente has a beach-level parking lot, so it's easy to get out onto the sand. There's a basketball court next to the beach, and a stand where you can rent a ball, umbrellas, lounge chairs, and several types of bicycles. The bicycle trail on the beach runs through Doheny State Beach to Dana Point Harbor, about nine miles. We met one manual wheelchair jock who pushes it regularly.

### CAPISTRANO

#### HOURS

6 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

714/661-7013

#### FEES

Blue spaces free

► **RESTROOMS** Restroom access is limited: the accessible stalls are front-transfer only, and there is no clear space beneath the sinks.



# San Clemente

SAN CLEMENTE CITY BEACH TO  
CALAFIA STATE BEACH

**S**AN CLEMENTE is a casual collection of twisting streets with low-roofed stucco homes and small, locally owned shops. Except for the military base at the south end of the town, the public has access to San Clemente's entire coastline; the question for the wheelchair rider is how to get to it. Most of the coastline is a thin ribbon of sand between the ocean and the bluffs, bisected by railroad tracks that run along the shore. Some of the coast is accessible only by stairs or steep trails. The railroad tracks can be another barrier. Still, there are a few places that work.

## *San Clemente Municipal Pier*

JACK LIEBSTER



## *San Clemente City Beach/Municipal Pier*

WEST END OF AVENIDA DEL MAR OFF EL CAMINO REAL

**S**AN CLEMENTE CITY BEACH is a two-mile stretch of sand at the base of the sea cliffs. Amtrak trains run along the base of the cliffs that line the beach. The 1,200-foot-long San Clemente Municipal Pier projects from the end of Avenida del Mar at the center of the beach. There is a paved path from the parking lot at Avenida del Mar across the tracks to the pier. You still have to deal with three-inch gaps between the pavement and the rails. The only other wheelchair access to the beach is via a short path at the end of Avenida Pico.

There are no paved paths on the beach, so a beach wheelchair is the best way to explore. You can borrow one at the lifeguard station. Call the informa-

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tion number to request it. Without a beach wheelchair, you can explore the pier, and perhaps the hard-packed sand trail that heads south from the pier along a chain-link fence at the back of the beach. The trail is firmest close to the fence.

► **PARKING / RESTROOMS** There's parallel parking on the street, and a municipal lot with blue spaces at the end of Avenida del Mar. Restrooms at the base of the pier have narrow stalls with grab bars, but maneuvering space is cramped. There are fully accessible restrooms in Fisherman's Restaurant on the north side of the pier.

### SAN CLEMENTE CITY

#### HOURS

4 am–midnight

#### INFORMATION

949/361-8219

#### FEES

\$1, blue spaces free

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Available at lifeguard station



## San Clemente State Beach

AVENIDA CALAFIA .2-MILE WEST OF INTERSTATE 5

**T**HE CAMPGROUNDS at San Clemente State Beach are on bluffs high above the ocean. They are great for tent or RV camping (full hookups are available). Most of the campsites are hard-packed dirt with low shrubbery. All are wheelchair accessible. Two in the hookup area and one in the tent area are reserved for campers with wheelchairs.

The paths leading from the campgrounds down to the beach are extremely long and steep. We skidded down (dangerously) only to encounter soft sand on the inland side of the railroad tracks. We were still quite far from the water. But

### SAN CLEMENTE STATE

#### HOURS

6 am–10 pm

#### INFORMATION

949/492-3156

#### FEES

*Day use*

\$6 per vehicle

\$3 with disabled placard

#### BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Two available



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Picnic area near San Clemente Municipal Pier

there are better ways: if you call (949) 492-5172, you can get a ride down to the beach. Pack everything you'll need for the day because there are no facilities on the beach. The beautiful ribbons of color in the cliffs are one reason to make the journey.

► **RESTROOMS** Restrooms on the bluffs have good access, with wide stalls and grab bars. Coin-operated showers have flip-down seats and low shower heads. There are no temperature controls for the showers, and the water was barely warm on our visit.

## *Calafia State Beach*

END OF AVENIDA CALAFIA

**A**VENIDA CALAFIA comes to a dead end at a small park facing the ocean. A row of granite boulders blocks wheelchair access from the parking lot to the beach. However, there is a decent patio in front of the concession stand in the center of the parking lot. The patio would make a nice place to rest or watch the sunset.

### CALAFIA

#### **HOURS**

6 am–10 pm

#### **INFORMATION**

714/492-5172

#### **FEES**

Free with disabled placard or plates

► **RESTROOMS** Restrooms off the patio have wide stalls with steel toilets, grab bars, but no doors.



# Public Transportation

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## General Transit Information

For information on transit systems serving the Los Angeles and Orange County coasts, and on specific routes and trips, call 213/922-6235, or within the 213 area code, 800/COMMUTE (800/266-6883); or look on-line at: [www.mta.net](http://www.mta.net), which has links to all other systems listed below. Fares for persons with disabilities are 25 cents unless otherwise noted; monthly discount passes are available for most systems. You may need to present special ID to get reduced rates or to buy passes.

## Los Angeles County

*MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority)/Metro Rail* is the main public transit system for Los Angeles. For information, call 213/922-6235, or within the 213 area code, 800/COMMUTE (800/266-6883); or see their website at [www.mta.net](http://www.mta.net). Fares are 45 cents plus 10 cents for transfers or 25 cents for express bus transfers. Monthly discount passes for unlimited use of rail and bus lines are \$12.

MTA issues a LACTOA (Los Angeles County Transit Operators Association) card that is good for discount fares for people with disabilities on all public transportation in the county. To apply for the card, go to any Metro Customer Center.

The 434 line serves the coast from Topanga County Beach south to Santa Monica State Beach and Pier. Other lines with coast routes are:

304, Will Rogers State Beach

22 and 304, Santa Monica State Beach and Pier

33, 333, and 436, Venice Beach

108, Marina del Rey

125 and 439, Dockweiler State Beach  
126 and 439, Manhattan County Beach  
232 and 439, Redondo County Beach  
445, 446, and 447, Los Angeles Harbor  
60, 232 and the Metro Blue Line, Long Beach

*LADOT (Los Angeles Department of Transportation)/ DASH (Downtown Area Short Hop)* provides CityRide programs, Commuter Express, and summer beach shuttles. For information, call 213/808-2273, or check their website at [www.ladottransit.com](http://www.ladottransit.com). For people with disabilities, LADOT offers the Cityride program, which includes discount METRO passes, and discounts on taxi and lift-van services. Group trips are possible. To join, or for general information on CityRide, call (213, 310, or 818) 808-RIDE or contact the nearest Senior Multipurpose Center.

The DASH Venice line runs from the Marina Freeway parking lot to Venice Beach on summer weekends and holidays (Memorial Day through Labor Day). Other lines to beaches include:

LC142 and LC147, Los Angeles Harbor  
LX437, Venice and Marina del Rey  
LX438, Dockweiler, Hermosa, and Manhattan Beaches  
(The "LX" lines are Commuter Express Lines. These make limited stops and run Monday through Friday during peak commute hours only. Fares are 85 cents; interagency transfers for use on other bus systems cost 10 cents.)

*Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines (the "Big Blue Bus")* serves the Santa Monica area. Information is available at 310/451-5444 or [www.bigbluebus.com](http://www.bigbluebus.com) on the web. These lines go to beaches:

SM9, Will Rogers State Beach  
SM1, SM2, and SM8, Santa Monica State Beach and Pier  
SM2 and SM8, Venice Beach

*Torrance Transit* is the Torrance public transportation system. Information is available at 310/792-0560 or on the web at [www.ci.torrance.ca.us/city/dept/transit/index.html](http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us/city/dept/transit/index.html). Transfers for any connecting bus continuing in the same direction cost 15 cents. Reduced fare cards can be bought at the Torrance Transit Store (Torrance City Hall, West Annex, 3031 Torrance Blvd.). The Dial-A-Lift program, which uses vans with wheelchair lifts, offers a book of 10 tickets for \$5. Lines to beaches include:

- TR3 and TR7, Redondo Beach Pier
- TR3, downtown Long Beach
- TR4, Torrance County Beach
- TR8, Manhattan County Beach and North Redondo Beach

*Long Beach Transit* provides public transportation for Long Beach. Information is available at 562/591-2301 or on the web at [www.lbtransit.com](http://www.lbtransit.com). “Passport” lines (the LBA, LBB, LBC, and LBD) have free fares in downtown Long Beach. Lines serving the area include:

- LBA and LBD, Belmont Shore
- LBC, Long Beach Harbor

## **Orange County**

*Orange County Transportation Authority* information is available at 714/636-RIDE (714/636-7433) or on the web at [www.octa.net](http://www.octa.net). OCTA Reduced Fare ID card, Medicare card, Braille Institute ID card, Service Connected Veteran ID card, other transit agencies’ disabilities card, or DMV Disabled Person Placard ID required for discount fares and discount monthly bus passes (\$10.00). Day passes are 50 cents. Lines that serve the coast include:

- 1, Long Beach
- 1, 70, and 72, Huntington Beach
- 1 and 42, Seal Beach
- 1, Newport Beach

47 and 73, Balboa

1 and 89, Laguna Beach

1, 70, 85, and 191, Dana Point

ACCESS is OCTA's shared-ride service for people whose disabilities prevent them from using the regular, fixed-route bus service. Eligible for OCTA ACCESS service are people who are unable to board a fixed route bus, cannot reach a bus stop because of physical or environmental barriers, or do not understand how to ride the bus. OCTA has a formal certification process that follows ADA guidelines. For applications, call 877/OCTA-ADA (877/628-2232).



## *To the guidebook user*

**Y**OU CAN HELP make the coast more accessible to wheelchair riders by writing to us. Did you find this book useful? Did it lead you to places you might not have visited without it? Did it tell you what you needed to know to get to the places described? What should we change or improve in any future edition? We would like to hear about other fully accessible places along the coast, and about any barriers that need to be removed.

**WRITE TO:**

Coastal Conservancy Publications  
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612  
510/286-0933  
[calcoast@igc.org](mailto:calcoast@igc.org)

**OR**

Coastwalk  
7207 Bodega Avenue  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
800/550-6854  
[coastwalk@coastwalk.org](mailto:coastwalk@coastwalk.org)

